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BOOK

Discreet Memoirs



From a painting by Simon Elwes

LADY CLODAGH ANSON

Younger daughter of John Henry 5th Marquess of Waterford by his wife Lady Blanche
Somerset only daughter of 8th Duke of Beaufort

BOOK

Discreet Memoirs

BY

LADY CLODAGH ANSON

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SECOND IMPRESSION

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TREASURED MEMORIES, WITH THE HOPE THAT THEY
MAY BRING FORTH INCREASED INSPIRATION IN
THE CAUSE OF THE HOMELESS AND
DESTITUTE, I DEDICATE
THIS BOOK

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PART I

CHAPTER I

I WAS born on August 6th, 1879, so I suppose I cannot really remember what happened fifty-two years ago, but all the same I seem to be able to do so, as I have heard so much about it all from my father and mother. Papa was down at Badminton judging at a Puppy Show, and Granny Beaufort, who was with my mother, sent him a telegram (which I still have), saying, "Fine girl, both doing well." He said "Damn" at the time—as he wanted a boy—but afterwards we were friends. He seems to have had rather poor luck in babies, as when my brother was born (April 23rd, 1875) he was so tiny and delicate that Granny suggested keeping him over for a bit until he had grown into a reasonable size: and the next attempt (April 30th, 1877) was twin girls; however, when Nana Holding expressed the pious wish that it should "please the Lord to take one of them," Papa out of pure contrariness was furious, and declared that it was entirely Nana Holding's fault that the elder one, Mary, died at a month old. He evidently thought that her remarks had put the idea into the Almighty's head. The younger twin, Susan, remained, and I was always very pleased that Mary died, though I never met the poor child personally, as I felt sure they would have been such friends, and I should have been left out in the cold. As it was, Susan and I fought joyfully together and enjoyed ourselves.

I was christened Clodagh after the River at Curraghmore—it means, "Stony Place"—but they used to tease me and say it meant "muddy water," to my great

fury, as I love the name, and have always been small-minded enough to care dreadfully if anyone copied it or called their children after me.

When we were small our great amusement was to come down and help Mother to dress. In those days there were no bathrooms, but she had a very long tin bath behind a screen, and we used to sail things in this. Susan had some little wooden houses given to her, and she insisted on sailing them, but all the paint came off, and the windows disappeared, and there were floods of tears and a sad lament, "Poor house, no winnies—Sad." My brother Tyrone wore a sailor suit, and always got his cuffs wet, but he used to forestall Mother's little lecture with great cunning, by rushing up to her with dripping sleeves and hurriedly saying, "I've wet my cuffs, but I'se a good boy—'cos I told the troof," all in one word; however, his zeal for truth seems to have abated somewhat later on, as I remember smoking a clay pipe with him behind a hedge at a very early age, and when he was a schoolboy we always knew if he came up and kissed us that he had been smoking forbidden cigarettes, and wanted to know if his breath smelt of smoke.

People used to think us very undemonstrative to these advances of his, as we did not attempt to return the embrace, but just nodded or shook our heads to give him the information required.

I fancy I must have arrived on the scene during the "Fenian" bad times in Ireland, though I was actually born in London at 30 Charles Street, St. James's Square, in a huge old house that was left to my father by his uncle, Lord John George Beresford, Primate of Ireland. Mother has often described to us the terrible times that they went through the following winters

over at Curraghmore, when my father was still trying to hunt his hounds ; they used to get threatening letters nearly every day, generally signed " Captain Moonlight," and telling them to prepare to die, so they always had to advertise the meets in one direction and tell the field privately where they were really going. All the saddles had two holsters each with loaded pistols in them. Mother said she was terrified for about a fortnight, but after that got used to it and took it as a matter of course. There was a threat to kidnap Tyrone, so he never was allowed out of the sight of the house, and when Papa and Mother went up to the Shooting Lodge at Glenbride, in co. Wicklow, they each had to sit at a little table with their backs to the wall, as the ground ran up on a slant from the windows, and anyone could have shot at them from outside if they had happened to be sitting at a table in the middle of the room. The tragic part of the whole thing was that the country was never so prosperous as then : the Curraghmore hounds having such a reputation for good sport, heaps of rich English people came over to hunt with them, took the most rotten little houses at fabulous rents, bought horses and fodder from the farmers at good prices, dealing with the local shops, and giving employment to heaps of people.

It must have been about 1881, when I was two years old, that they finally succeeded in making it impossible to go on, and when the hounds were poisoned, my father just sold off all the horses, shut up the place, and went away to live in England. Of course, all the people were horrified at such base behaviour on his part, and roared and bawled over their woes—nobody to employ them, nobody to buy their horses, hay, and oats—fearful groans and moans.

The word landlord in Ireland always seems to bring up a picture of some brutal creature turning out starving people on to the side of the road, but as a matter of fact, most landlords were very patient and good, and certainly my father would wait and wait for months and even years for rents if he knew that the tenants had had bad luck and really would like to pay if they could, but sometimes there were evictions in cases where the tenant could pay and didn't intend to, trusting to the onus that would fall on the landlord if he took extreme measures to deter him from doing so. It was generally the worst tenant who made the most noise and commotion and caused the most frightful scenes. English people do not understand the difference between the characters of the two nations. Whereas the Irish people make as much fuss and chat as possible and enjoy their grievances, English people are generally absolutely speechless with despair, and the same Englishman who happened to see an eviction, and who would be horrified at such a barbarous scene, if he was a landlord in England would think nothing of calmly giving notice to quit to some farmers on his estate whose people may have been tenants there for a hundred years or more. The farmer might be broken-hearted, but would leave quietly without any fuss. The conditions are so absolutely different. A prosperous farmer in England likes to keep his house and garden neat and well cared for, but the prosperity of an Irish farmer is judged by the size of the manure heap in front of the house, and if an Irish tenant chooses to keep his rent paid no power on earth could make him quit his farm, even if he would not take the trouble to till his land, and allowed thistles and weeds to spread all over and ruin other people's farms next door.

There was a thing called "tenant right," which meant that any farmer could sell the right to take his farm to another man without consulting the landlord at all. The new man might be a well-known bad lot, or an enemy of the owner of the land, but the latter could not interfere or prevent him coming in as a new tenant. Nobody in England would stand such a thing for a moment, even if his tenants were very good and had been there for a long time ; the landlord just says he wants his house, cottage, or whatever it is, and looks upon that as quite sufficient reason for turning anyone out.

The Irish like to make as much noise as possible over every event ; a funeral is a " godsend " to them, and they will go miles to attend it. The priests discourage " wakes " now, but they still take place in outlying parts. The dead body is sat up in a chair, all dressed up, and with a glass of whisky arranged in its hand, and all the relations, friends, and neighbours sit round all night talking about the deceased, always in eulogistic terms, and drinking glass after glass to his or her memory. As the night goes on the guests get a little sleepy and fuddled, and the conversation becomes more jerky ; some of them will wake up suddenly and say, " Ah ! he was a good man," then relapse into unconsciousness again ; this would wake others up, and the subdued chorus of " He was then," " You'll never see the like of him again," and so forth would go on for a while. " The corpse," as they call it, may have been the most horrible old creature in life, but it is not etiquette to allude to his faults. When elderly people are on their deathbed, they very often make all arrangements for their funeral with their sorrowing relatives, like the story of the man who said they were to have a

whole barrel of porter at his funeral, but expressed a wish that they should call the guests in and drink it before the funeral procession started, as he would be with them then, and he couldn't bear to think of them drinking it after the funeral was over, "and him not there any more."

Rather an amusing thing happened to a doctor who was a great friend of ours. He had promised to do the work of a local dispensary doctor in a small village about six miles away while the latter was on his holidays ; however, a week before the time arranged, the dispensary doctor's wife got very ill, so he had to put off his journey. He wrote explaining this, and added that he would let our friend know when he was able to get away. Some time later a telegram arrived saying, " Mrs. Murphy died this morning. I take my holiday from to-day," which was rather an unfortunate way of putting it. We thought that poor Mrs. Murphy was starting her holiday too, as her husband was not renowned for his sobriety or agreeable disposition.

My father was very fond of, and amused by, all the people, and he could put on a marvellous brogue. I remember John Morley coming to stay when he was Chief Secretary and supposed to be a Home Ruler. One would imagine, as they were always crying out for Home Rule and roaring about the iniquities of landlords, that John Morley would have been received with shouts of joy and Papa with howls of hatred, but in Ireland everything goes by contraries. My father drove himself about everywhere, and everyone rushed out and talked to him in the most friendly fashion, but Mr. Morley had to be pursued wherever he went, even round the estate at Curraghmore, by four armed policemen on a sidecar. One day, when he was driving

with us right out in the country-side, a man came rushing out, shouting, " Welcome, my Lord " ; my father pulled up at once, and they had a great gossip and a lot of good-natured chaff. Afterwards John Morley said, " Was that one of your good tenants ? " and was dumbfounded when Papa said, " No, he was an evicted tenant and one of the biggest blackguards in the whole country," which was quite true, but I think Mr. Morley always believed that the whole incident was stage-managed on purpose for his benefit.

One night during the bad times my father sat up late writing letters, and looking out of the window noticed that the night-watchman who was supposed to walk round the garden side of the house had left his gun in a little hut, and was chatting with the other night-watchman in the courtyard, so just for fun Papa climbed out of the window and stole the gun. The next day the man appeared and told him the most exciting and circumstantial story about how he was set on by six men, how he had fought them single-handed for hours, but in the end they had knocked him unconscious, and taken his gun away. After listening with great interest for some time, my father picked up the gun from behind his chair and handed it to him, upon which the night-watchman said, " Be gob, then, 'twas you that took it. Me-lord, sure I only left it the one minute." Papa chaffed him mildly, but took the precaution of locking the gates of the courtyard, so as they wouldn't be tempted to have their nightly gossip.

When we came over to England after shutting up Curraghmore we took a house in the Brocklesby country for the following winter to be near Victoria, Lady Yarborough, and her second husband, " the cat " Richardson. I fancy she was doing Master of the

Hounds at that time. They were both the most charming people, and great friends of ours. Our second winter we had a house called Hampton, near Malpas in Cheshire, to be near the Cholmondeleys, who were cousins of my mother's, and I can just remember a landing in that house, with a big table on it, and someone everlastingly brushing hunting clothes covered with mud. The third winter we were at Quenby, in Leicestershire. My father used to carry me round after church on Sundays to see the horses, because I had my indoor shoes on—red shoes they were, very smart !

I was promoted to having breakfast in the schoolroom there, and I can see the bow window now and the round table in it. After I married, we were staying at Lowesby, and I went over to Quenby and tried to find various places ; the schoolroom was discovered, now used as housekeeper's room, and some iron steps in the sunk fence at the back, which I declared were there, because I remembered, on being chased by a bull in the field, the agony of running to them and the horror of getting the thud of the bull's approach in the small of my back. We found them hidden under brambles, the present owners having no knowledge of them at all.

At Lowesby is the famous gate which my Great-uncle Henry, 3rd Marquess of Waterford, jumped for a bet in the dining-room of that house.

During the second winter at Quenby, when I was about six years old, my father met with a hunting accident which made him a cripple for the rest of his life. He was riding through a gate and the wind blew it shut, giving him a very severe blow on the spine. The next day his legs felt numb ; unfortunately, he thought nothing of it, and went on hunting until the

pain became so intense he had to give up, but of course no one thought that it was anything but a temporary accident which would pass. Susan and I used to be a lot with him while he was laid up, and we had all sorts of conspiracies together, most of which he would invent and put us up to. I remember his writing a marvellous letter which we copied out, a sort of ultimatum to Mother, saying, "You always promised that when we came to Quenby we should stay down to late dinner; we do not ask for sweets or biscuits, but we would like soup, fish, and a cut from the joint."

Susan and I were rather sad about the "sweets and biscuits," but Papa said that it was always a mistake to ask for too much. Mother was much amused, but suggested that "a cut from the joint" was rather a vulgar expression, to my father's huge joy, he having thought it out carefully on purpose.

CHAPTER II

WE must have gone back to Curraghmore about 1886, as I think the people were more settled down and peaceful by then. The house is not very large, but very contrary, like the rest of Ireland. There is a huge courtyard about 200 yards long in the front and stables running all the way along both sides of it. Then the back-door is next to the front-door, and the kitchens and servants' rooms are on each side of them. The front hall is very old, and was the original castle, where our ancestors always lived in the wild old days ! I believe the courtyard used to be a bog, and the family must have chosen the place on purpose, as it made a very safe defence from their enemies on that side, though they themselves knew a safe track through the marsh when they wanted to get out. Eventually this bog got filled in when the times became more peaceful. The hall and the big billiard-room above it are the only bits that remain, and are on a different level from the rest of the house.

In those days the family name was Power, Poer, or de la Poer ; in fact, anybody who was able to write at all just spelt his name any way he liked.

There are some quite interesting little bits of history about the place, beginning with King John's Bridge over the Clodagh river, which was built by our ancestor of that date, for Prince John (son of Henry II) to cross the river when he came to Curraghmore on his mission round Ireland as his father's representative to extract fealty from all the ruling chiefs—about 1180. There

had been a ford over the river at that place, but it was evidently considered that a bridge would be more in keeping with the occasion, so this one was built, and they certainly knew how to build in those days, as there it stands to this day as firm as a rock.

When Cromwell came over to Ireland in 1649 there were only a child and his widowed mother living at Curraghmore, the father having been slain by the White Knight in mortal combat. The widow had no wish that her baby son should be massacred and the house razed to the ground, so she rushed out and invited Cromwell in to lunch, thus saving the situation, which certainly would never have happened if her lord and master had been alive at the time—men are always so pugnacious.

In 1690 there was an Earl of Tyrone who was beheaded in the Tower of London for leading an Irish Rebellion against William of Orange. I am afraid our family had not a very good name in the South of Ireland many years ago, as there is a record of an old song, which was sung by the merchants in the town of Waterford, the refrain of which ran, " Oh, save us from the Poers and the O'Sullivans," so evidently we must have combined together to raid these unfortunate people and take their possessions from them. What has happened to the O'Sullivans I don't know, but they have disappeared. Perhaps we put them in the forefront of the battle and then robbed and massacred them on the way home. This was considered quite correct behaviour in those days. There is a legend about two clans from Tipperary coming over the Knockmealdown Mountains to attack and rob the Desmonds on the Blackwater river; on their way home one of them played this clever trick on the other, and left them strewn

about on the mountains, dead and dying, but the story goes that the clan who were betrayed put sphagnum moss, which abounds up there, upon their wounds, and soon got so well and strong that they pursued their friends, caught them up, and routed them utterly, killing most of them and carrying off all the loot to their own part of the country. It was this tale that started the idea of our making sphagnum moss dressings for the wounded in the war, and we were told afterwards by both doctors and patients that there really was a marvellous healing power in the stuff. No wound got poisoned, and even if the dressing was left on for forty-eight hours the moss absorbed everything, but never stuck.

There is a big domain round the house, and in the spring bluebells are just like pots of paint that have been upset, making a huge carpet under the old oak trees, stretching on and up a gentle slope as far as the eye can see. When the bluebells are going over, the young bracken comes up through them everywhere, growing tall and spreading out, making a kindly green covering to hide the dying flowers. The other side of the Clodagh river there is a primeval forest that has never been touched : it runs for miles, and is as silent as the grave. No birds will ever live there. My father cut a ride four miles long through the heart of this forest, and planted a double row of rhododendrons on each side. It goes up and down hills, and is the loveliest sight in May that anyone could imagine, but you can only walk or ride along the tiny path ; there are rocks and heather everywhere, the flaming rhododendrons and the dark forest making a weird background on either side. I never met my grandfather, but he went by the name of " Lord John," and we always called him that too when we

spoke of him. He was a younger son, and only succeeded quite late in life, being a clergyman at the parish of Mullaghbrack, near Dundalk. His mother was Lady Susanna Carpenter, only daughter and heiress of the 2nd Earl of Tyrconnel. She also inherited Ford Castle in Northumberland, which had belonged to her mother, a daughter of Lord Delaval, and thus came into our family.

I believe Susanna was very unkind to all her children, and the boys spent most of their time with their uncle, Lord John George Beresford, Primate of Ireland, who seems to have been the kindest and most charming of men. There was only one daughter, Sarah, who married the Lord Shrewsbury of that time.

Travelling in those days was such an undertaking that the whole family moved to London for seven years, and then back to Curraghmore for the next seven, and so on. There was no service of boats to Ireland, so they had to hire a sailing vessel for themselves and another to take all their belongings. One time, when they were going over, the heavy luggage ship was caught in a storm and sank with all hands, so the silver plate and valuables went to the bottom of the sea. I think they used to sail from Waterford to Bristol, and then drive up to London from there.

Lord John's eldest brother, Henry, succeeded his father in 1826, and married (1842) the beautiful Louisa Stuart, daughter of Lord Stuart de Rothesay and sister of Lady Canning. They were supposed to be the most lovely sisters of that time, though I always heard that both their father and mother were extremely plain, short, and stumpy, so I don't know how the two girls managed to be so tall, graceful, and handsome, but they certainly were, and very talented as well. Aunt

Louisa painted the most attractive pictures and frescoes, and her style was so original that if you went into any room and knew nothing about Art, you would recognise even a sketch of hers at once. Her drawing was very often quite incorrect, but the colouring and atmosphere were absolutely unique. When she was newly married and had not been long at Curraghmore, Aunt Louisa had a carriage accident, the horse running away and throwing her out. Uncle Henry found her unconscious, and carried her all the way home in his arms. She recovered, but she never had any children, so my father, being the eventual heir, spent all his holidays there, and was treated like their son. I believe Aunt Louisa simply hated living in the country, having always been accustomed to a lot of artistic and literary society in London, and as Uncle Henry thought of nothing in the world but horses, racing, and hunting, it must have been very dull for her. He had about eighty horses at Curraghmore, and even put up hurdles on the lawns in front of the house when there was no more room for them in the stables, but I believe Aunt Louisa's artistic soul completely revolted over this outrage, and she had them removed.

Uncle Henry was a very wild creature, and did some amazing things. He once jumped over someone's dining-room table all laid for dinner for a bet, and cleared it without breaking a single thing. When he was a boy at Eton he used to get into all sorts of mischief, and got thrashed so often that when he was leaving school for good in 1836 he stole the swishing block out of the head master's room and took it home to Curraghmore with him, where it still is. He broke his neck out hunting in 1859 at Corbally, Carrick-on-Suir, over quite a small fence. His horse was tired and never



"CURRAGHMORE"

Reproduced from picture by Lionel Edwards, published with the permission of the Sporting Gallery, Ltd., King Street Covent Garden from where a coloured print may be obtained

rose at it, turning head over heels. Uncle Henry left Ford Castle to his wife for her life. She lived there after his death, and at Highcliffe in Hampshire, which she inherited from her mother, so that we never saw Ford until it came back to my father at her death in 1891. My grandfather was forty-five when he succeeded, and came to live at Curraghmore. My father and all the uncles were terrified of him, as he had the most frightful temper. He had married Christiana Leslie, of Glaslough, co. Monaghan, in 1843, and my father, John Henry, was born a year later. I don't think poor Granny had much of a time with him : he would never let her hunt, or do anything she wanted to, but after he died in 1866, she made up for lost time, hunted as much as she liked, and enjoyed herself.

Her sons used to play all sorts of tricks on her. One day she was late coming down, so they brought her horse up outside her bedroom door, and insisted on her mounting there and riding down the stairs. She had five sons altogether, my father, Charlie (1846), Bill (1847), Marcus (1848), and then, fourteen years after, Delaval (1862), who of course was the pet lamb. It was a good thing that she never had a girl, as she seemed to hate women, and was always very bitter about them. It seems that her father was furious at her being a girl, and he never would speak to her, though why that should have set her against women I don't know ; I should have thought that it would put her more off unreasonable fathers. She had rather an unfortunate habit of saying loudly, in front of a large house-party, " I produced five sons, and yet I've only got one grandson," looking severely at my mother, but Susan and I were not at all frightened of her, and used to say, " Nonsense, Granny, you're very lucky to have

us," when she started grumbling about our not being boys.

She had three sisters, and they all used to quarrel whenever they met, and generally were not on speaking terms. Aunt Penelope Cavendish-Bentinck was a dear old thing, but very eccentric. Though she had heaps of money and a lovely house she would not keep a cook, so she had to go and get her meals from all her relations, and instead of taking them in turn, she would go every day to the same people, until they got fed up and put her name at the door. I remember her coming to Charles Street day after day for luncheon, until my father and mother said that they could not stand it, so when she arrived the next day old Brown, our hall porter, told her that they were out to lunch, but she, nothing daunted, said, "Very well, I'll come in and have it with the children," and in she came quite firmly, finding us all there. Of course she knew quite well that they were in, as my father was an invalid, and never went out and Mother hardly ever left him. However, Granny was made of sterner stuff, and when her sister Penelope tried it on her, she said to the butler, "Tell her I will not have her here again ; if she wants to have any food, she can have it in the hall." To everyone's astonishment he returned and said that Mrs. Cavendish-Bentinck would be pleased to have her lunch there, and I remember quite well going over and peeping through the door hinge to see Aunt Penelope standing up and eating away off a tray on the slab of the hat-stand.

She was very kind to us always, and used to take us out driving in her Victoria. If we passed a toy-shop she would get out and let us each choose a toy. It makes me blush now to think of what expensive ones we always chose ; my brothers insisted on getting an

enormous yacht one day, which must have cost mints of money. The only drawback to driving with Penelope was her habit of leaving cards on her acquaintances. She did not take a footman on the box, and of course the coachman could not get down and ring the bell ; we all had clean gloves on, and those old-fashioned pull bells would have dirtied them at once, so we used to sit in the carriage in front of the various doors until someone passed, when Aunt Penelope would suddenly shout at them, " Fool—ring the bell." They were generally so startled that they did it without thinking and fled terrified, but sometimes they answered back with the most blistering repartee, which we found very embarrassing.

The other two sisters, Emily and Julia Leslie, were unmarried, and used to live at Bourdon House, Davies Street. I don't think they were ever on speaking terms, but they always gave parties on the same day, one in the front drawing-room and one in the back, and as the guests arrived they were each asked, " Are you for Miss Emily or for Miss Julia ? " and shown into the appropriate room. Some of the people were asked by both, and if so they were allowed to move from one room to the other. Julia was very vague, and always wore a huge shawl out of doors, but as she was not very tidy, one end of it was fastened in front and the other corner generally trailed behind her in the dust. Papa was very fond of her, but he said he used to feel rather ashamed of walking with her, and one day when he was quite a newly joined subaltern in the 1st Life Guards and wanted to be very smart, he saw her coming towards him in the Park, carrying a huge fish in her arms, wrapped in a piece of newspaper, with the head and tail sticking out. He rushed off to the Ser-

pentine, but she followed calling after him, so he hired a boat and rowed up and down feverishly while she wandered round and round the edge trying to head him off every time he came near the shore.

The Beresford brothers used to play tricks on their aunts. Penelope would go to dances and always stayed until the end, so one night, when Bill and Marcus had helped her into her carriage, they picked up the tiny linkman and put him in head downwards on to her lap, the carriage driving off with nothing to be seen but the poor man's legs waving wildly out of the window. Uncle Bill was her godson, and once when he came back from India, he called, and finding her not at home, left a chaffing message with the butler saying, "Tell Mrs. Cavendish-Bentinck that Lord William Beresford called, and that he said you were to be sure and tell her that he has never forgotten the vulgar tongue she taught him," meaning his catechism. However, the man was very nervous about the message, and after saying, "I hardly like to tell you, madam," in the end blurted out: "A gentleman came and said he had never forgotten the vulgar language you had taught him."

Granny and Uncle Delaval were at Curraghmore with my father until he married Mother in 1874. Delaval used to be there a lot after that date, as Papa was so much older than he was, that he felt more like a father than a brother, and I think that he thought Granny was spoiling him rather. Mother told me that at first, when she went up to say good night to him, she used to find him sobbing away to himself, and he confided to her that he didn't like his mother being ousted: the fact that it was Mother who had ousted her didn't seem to occur to him, but he soon got used

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to the idea, and became great friends with her. They must have had great fun in those days before the bad times started, marvellous hunting, plenty of amusing neighbours, and funny things happening all the time. I wish I could remember all the topical rhymes they used to make up, bringing in their friends and the various happenings. There was one about some of the Field overriding the hounds which ended :

“ For the tail hound is dead,
And the rest of the pack
Have fled to the Galtees
And can't be got back.”

(The Galtee mountains are in Tipperary.)

One girl who jumped on to a hound and killed it wrote to Papa and asked him if she might “ buy him a new one,” for which remark she got unmercifully chaffed.

Of course, my father gave way to great wrath and a good deal of heated language, like all Masters of Hounds. One day he saw three men on horses coming along a road, and they headed the fox, so he galloped furiously towards them, shouting, “ Oh ! you—oh ! you——” At this point, getting round the corner, he suddenly realized that they were priests, who of course could not very well be cursed, so his voice died away into tones of more sorrow than anger : “ Oh ! you—miserable priests,” to everybody's huge joy. Another time it was three small boys who headed the fox, and Papa's voice could be heard thundering down from the top of a precipice : “ I'll just come down and cut the little livers out of you,” at which the terrified youths each got behind a very small tree, hoping to hide their livers from him. Mother declared that once he shouted at

some people in a hamlet of about six cottages : " I'll just come down and kill the whole village." Papa used to take out cold tea in his flask, and one day an old man who had opened a gate for him said, " Sure, I'd like a taste of that, me-lord," thinking it was whisky he was drinking, and when my father said, " Oh ! you wouldn't like this—it's only cold tea," the old man answered, " Sure—the likes of you wouldn't be drinking cold tay," with awful scorn, and nothing would make him believe that it was.

It was the same with the judging at horse shows. Some farmers would come along and say to Papa, " I have a nice little mare, me-lard, going to the show, and I'd be grateful to you if you'd give her the prize," and even when my father would explain to him that he must give it to the best one there, the man would only say, " Ah, yes, of course, I know all that ; but it would be aisy for your lordship to see that my little mare was the best." Naturally, the horses only have numbers on them when they are being judged, and one couldn't possibly know which horse belonged to which farmer, but nothing could persuade them that it was not on account of the " little word " they had said to Papa, if he did happen to give their horse the prize, and if he didn't they just thought someone else must have got their " little word " in first.

We had a marvellous old groom called Paddy Quinn, who was a great character. One time my father wanted to get rid of a very good-looking horse which had the most diabolical temper. He knew that no one would buy it if he knew that it was his, as it was too well known. So he told Paddy to take it to Carmee Fair, and just sell it for what he could get, and not on any account to say who it belonged to, or to pay any attention

to him if he saw him at the Fair. Paddy was the only person who could ride the horse, as he just sat on and let it go where it liked. My father said he saw Paddy ambling about, and lots of people following him round trying to do a deal, but the horse always moved away before they got it fixed up, and Paddy never tried to stop it in case it showed off its temper and put the buyers off. Eventually he sold it, and when he got home came to report. My father said, " You didn't tell them whose horse it was, did you, Paddy ? " and he answered, " I did not then, mi-lard." " What did you say, Paddy ? " " Well, now, no one could guess from what I told them that it belonged to you, mi-lard." " Yes, but, Paddy, what did you tell them ? " " Sure, I told them that the horse belonged to a blind widow by the say (sea) ! "

A lot of funny things used to happen at the Petty Sessions too. One man had a neighbour up for doing him " grievous bodily harm," but they could not extract from him in what way the prisoner had injured him. " What did he do to you ? " " Well now, mi-lard, he called me nicknames." " That isn't grievous bodily harm. What else did he do to you ? " " He called me nicknames, and he threw stones at me, mi-lard." Papa, cheering up : " He threw stones at you : did he hit you ? " " He did not then, mi-lard, but he frightened me." " Come, come, that's not bodily harm ; dismiss the case." " Wait now, mi-lard, and I'll tell you the truth. He called me nicknames, and he threw stones at me, and he frightened me that—that he gave me a pain in the inside ! "

CHAPTER III

My father was a very keen politician, and used to lead the Irish Unionist Party in the House of Lords, so we were accustomed to live in an atmosphere of politics from the earliest age ; we were brought up to believe that Mr. Gladstone ate two little girls on toast every morning for breakfast, and I am not sure I don't still believe it ! The bitterness was so fierce at that time that it is difficult to understand what it was like in these more apathetic days, but to people who lived in Ireland then it was so ghastly. Every time Mr. Gladstone made one of his Home Rule speeches in England, it was a signal for half a dozen wretched landlords or their agents to be shot at and murdered from behind a hedge. The agent was even worse off than the landlord, as the latter could at least go away and live in England, but the unfortunate agent had to stay and do his job, so he was the one who generally got killed, or persecuted and boycotted until his life was made impossible. No one in England realizes what boycotting really entails. The name comes from a man called Colonel Boycott, who was the first to be treated in this way. It means that no shop dare sell you food, no farmer supply you with anything, no one will work for you ; if your water supply depends on any stream, it is deviated from its course, if in a well (unless inside an enclosed courtyard) some dead animal is thrown down to make it useless ; no one would dare speak to you, or have you in his house, even if it were safe for you to come out and be seen at all ; your cattle, sheep, and horses in the fields

would be driven away; even if they were left, no one would buy them, or any of your produce. The house itself would be barricaded as if for a siege, the family living upstairs in case of shooting through the window, and if any servant or outside labourer was faithful enough to stay on, they would be as much in danger of their lives as the people were themselves.

There were many cases of this boycotting in the Fenian times, and it was terrible to see farms and small places belonging to country gentry with the land lying derelict all round the house, no one daring or able to harvest the crops, which stood as they were left, all overgrown and spoiled. There was a family called Briscoe living at a place called Tinvaughan, not far from Curraghmore, who went through the most awful time. They had been gentry, and it was quite a nice big place, but they had got rather poor and gone a bit to seed; anyhow, this boycotting business absolutely finished them off, and one of the daughters, who was very young at the time, fell in love with a labourer who had stayed on to see them through, and married him. Of course, being stuck in the house together and never seeing anyone else, it was bound to happen. She used to live in a little labourer's cottage at Kilmacthomas afterwards, and I remember her well, going down with other peasant women to get water at the well, and looking just the same as them, with a shawl over her head, all dirty and untidy. I got an awful shock when I was told who she was. When I was about eighteen she wrote to me and told me one of her children was very ill, and the doctor said she must have milk and special things, so I sent her the things and also a weekly sum for milk. After about five weeks the child died, and I

was very touched, as she sent me back the few shillings for the milk with a sad little letter saying, "It's no use now." She might easily have kept the money and used it for one of her many other children, even if she had let me know that no more money need be sent.

These Briscoes were a most extraordinary family, the sort that you might read about in Irish books. The old man was supposed to be very fast, and the saying in the countryside was, "Old Mr. Briscoe daren't throw a stone at any child in Carrick for fear it might be his own." Mrs. Briscoe was a very fierce woman who did a lot of the housework and was very plain spoken. Lady Slacke, whose husband was quartered in Carrick years ago (in the 10th Hussars), has some marvellous stories about this good lady. The first time she called at Tinvaughan as a young bride, she knocked and knocked at the door for ages, and at last Mrs. Briscoe appeared all covered with flour, calling out, "Go away, go away, I'm busy salting pork below." However, she relented after a bit, when she realized who it was, and looking at young Mrs. Slacke with great interest and wonder, remarked, "So you've married Captain Slacke; well, I'll tell you now, he's the ugliest man I ever met, except my own son Gilly!"

Lady Slacke has a huge sense of humour, and she got great value out of Mrs. Briscoe and her marvellous remarks. My father used to delight in all the stories about this family. Mr. Briscoe had hunted the Curraghmore hounds after Uncle Henry broke his neck until Papa was old enough to take them on, and one story always amused me frightfully. It seems that Mr. Briscoe would ask in all sorts of old fox-hunting cronies in the evenings, and the girls got awfully bored by them, particularly as their father used to say, "Now

then, girls, let's have a tune on the harp," and they had to play on and on, while the men talked and laughed and made such a noise that they drowned the music altogether. One evening they thought they would be very clever, and take out some of the strings of the harp so that they could not play. When the gentlemen appeared after dinner and hilariously asked for the usual music, the "young ladies" said they were sorry that some strings had broken, so they could not "oblige," upon which old Briscoe was very put out, and said, "Ah, sure you don't need to call on them notes at all," and made them play all the same, to their great fury.

We always went to London for the summer on account of all my father's political activities, and Mother used to take us to the Gallery in the House of Lords to hear him speak, which he had to do sitting down, on account of his being an invalid. We were frightfully thrilled on these occasions, and swelled with pride to hear him, but sometimes the endless topic got a bit tedious at meals. We had what they called "open lunches" at Charles Street, a thing that has ceased to exist now, I think. The table was always laid for about twelve or fourteen, and any friend or acquaintance used to turn up at two o'clock when he felt inclined. Of course, heaps of political people came, as well as any who were specially invited. The conversation was very interesting no doubt, but inclined to get a bit monotonous for small children. I remember, when Susan had a cold one day, I went up after lunch to see her in bed, and was heard to complain bitterly that we had had "an awful lunch, nothing but clauses and sub-sections!" The great singers, Jean and Edouard de Reszke, lived opposite in the Continental Hotel, and

they told cousin Nelly Londonderry that we were most extraordinary people : we either had masses of men to our parties or heaps of women. The reason for which was that Charles Street being a huge house, with enormous rooms in it, lots of political committee meetings and some charity ones were held there. Nelly was so amused that she brought the De Reszkes over, there and then, to see Mother, who was ill at the time, and they stayed and sang to us and were very friendly and delightful. They used to have very rackety parties after the Opera at the hotel, and Susan and I were often woken up on summer nights with all the noise that was going on over the way. We crept to our window, which was higher up than theirs opposite, so we were able to look on for ever so long at these amusing orgies. Their bedrooms had washing basins fixed in the windows, and in the summer, when these were wide open, they would wash their hands and sing all the time, we were transfixed with the glory of their voices.

We had the key of St. James's Square and used to play there a lot. Mother nearly got arrested one day, as she was seen by a policeman, walking along towards the Square, armed with an enormous kitchen knife, Susan and I walking dejectedly beside her, in floods of tears, holding the little wooden coffin of a pet canary draped in a piece of black velvet. This sad little procession entered the Square garden to dig the grave, but the policeman evidently thought that we were to be the victims, not considering a kitchen knife a suitable grave-digging implement, so he prowled round the railings in a most suspicious manner and kept a watch on the proceedings.

When we were very small our great treat was to go with Mother and dress Grandpapa, who had a lodging

in a funny little house near St. James's Palace, which he came up to when he wanted to go racing, or otherwise amuse himself, as Granny Beaufort hated London, and hardly ever would leave Badminton. We always saw the changing of the Guard first, and then went on to help Grandpapa with his toilet. If he was in his bath we had to wait downstairs, and there was always a copy of the *Pink 'Un*, which we used to read and think frightfully funny, without seeing the point of any of the jokes. When Grandpapa was safely in his dressing-gown we were allowed up to watch him shave. We adored him, and he was the most amusing and delightful companion that ever lived ; he spoiled us outrageously. Granny was awfully good to us too, but did not spoil us at all ; however, Grandpapa used to put us up to answering "Granny does" when anyone said "Who spoils you?" just to tease her. We always went to Church at the Chapel Royal on Sundays—the ten o'clock service was our favourite one, as there was no sermon. We went into a gallery at right angles to the one that the Royalties sat in, as only men were allowed downstairs at that time. There was a long pew just below us where Cabinet Ministers sat, and we had great difficulty in restraining Mother from dropping one of the huge old-fashioned prayer books on to Mr. Gladstone's head below ! We felt that, though it would be a splendid thing to do at any other time, somehow Church was not a suitable moment. Susan and I were very correct and particular at that period of our career.

Years afterwards, when I was growing up, I witnessed an amusing incident at the Chapel Royal. The seating arrangements had been altered by then, and we were put downstairs in a long pew opposite to the one that Cabinet Ministers occupied. In front of

both these pews were some seats like choir stalls, but with no desk or rail in front of them. From where we sat we could not see the people who were seated on our side, as the front of our book rest seemed to bulge over them. Visitors were given tickets for these places, and a woman who was sitting in front of Mr. Balfour had a very high feathery brush on the front of her hat which poked right up near a gas-jet. She was evidently very interested in looking about and seeing all the Royalties, etc., and moved her head continually up and down until this brush touched the gas and caught alight. I saw Arthur Balfour, who was very vague, look down as if he smelt something burning, and when he realised it was this feather, he seized it in his hands and began twisting it round and round to put it out ; in so doing the hat began twisting with it, and as it was firmly pinned on to the woman's hair that started twisting too. It really was the funniest sight I have ever seen : the service droning on, everyone kneeling in prayer, the woman knowing nothing of the gas-jet, and her face of horror as she felt her hair and head being slowly twisted off by some unseen power behind. Meanwhile, Mr. Balfour had settled down to his job, and with the most serious and interested face was crumpling up the smouldering brush, quite unconscious that it was attached to anyone below. The woman never made a sound, and I was paralysed looking on, but even when the fire was quite extinguished, and he let the feather go, she never dared move or look round again, but sat terrified and crouching down, her hat, a blackened ruin, twisted sideways on her head.

Arthur Balfour used to come a lot to Charles Street, and I remember him saying to Mother, " I always

consider that, for a politician, I really am a very truthful man," when she chaffed him about some remark that was not quite accurate.

Now as I look back on our life when we were small, I see how unlike it was to that of most children of our generation. They were usually hidden up in nursery or schoolroom, seldom appearing or seeing their parents, but I suppose it was because Papa lay on the sofa most of the day and Mother was so delicate too, that they wanted us always to be with them, even at breakfast. We used to work for an hour and a half before, from half-past eight, and there was always a continuous battle raging as to what we were to have when we got up. We voted for nothing till breakfast at ten, but governesses invariably argued that we could not work on an empty stomach, so they used to try hot milk, which always had a skim on it, and then cold milk, which was too dank for words early in the morning. I used to upset mine anywhere, into plant pots, or even under the carpet, but it was always found out and gave cause for fearful fusses. Luncheon was at two in those days. If you said come to lunch, it meant two. I remember the time one-thirty lunch started coming in, when I was about eighteen; people were very ashamed and apologetic over it, and used to say, "Do you mind—we have it at half-past one now, to give the children a longer afternoon."

My father could not bear any noise or vibration, and unfortunately our schoolroom was over Mother's sitting-room, where he generally lay on the sofa, as he hated to be alone downstairs; also I think the boards of the floors were laid lengthways instead of across, and so if one walked about at all the whole floor seemed to bounce up and down. In consequence of this we

were always getting messages from him saying, " Must you dance over my head ? " though he used to be quite good tempered about it when we met the next time. However, knowing that it upset him, we got into the habit of creeping about noiselessly and not talking loudly or shouting in our games, and it made us feel very out of it when we went out to tea with other children. We stood about when they romped and made a noise, and could not join in. My father had a horror of children's parties for some reason, and never would let us go ; even when King Edward and Queen Alexandra (then Prince and Princess of Wales) invited us to one they had every year at Marlborough House, Papa asked for us to be excused ; but the Prince, who came to sit with Papa very often and was always frightfully nice to us, came himself and begged for us to be allowed to come, as it was the last one they would ever give, Princess Maud being sixteen that year.

I remember so well the excitement ; and how we rushed out to get new frocks, made of white Swiss embroidery, with blue sashes ; and the party itself, how we clung tightly on to Mother, and watched it all, but did not think of taking part in the dances and the games. Such a huge ballroom full of children. The Princess was very deaf at that time, but she looked so lovely and so kind. All the same, we did not dare to speak to each other, even on the far side of the room, because someone had told us that she could lip-read, and knew what everyone was saying, however far away they were, and it made us very nervous.

When the Prince came to Charles Street we looked on him as quite a friend of ours, and were not a bit in awe of him, but one day we rushed into the green room as usual on coming in from our walk, and started telling

Papa of a cab-horse fallen or some other exciting incident. My father said rather stiffly, "Children, don't you see His Royal Highness?" I stopped dead, very taken aback, but Susan said, "Oh, dear, I thought you were at Sandringham," and then retreated backwards to a chair and sat on his hat. We always noticed particularly if there were two sentries or one at Marlborough House, so as to know if there was a chance of his coming or not, and that day for some reason there had been only one. Another day the Prince dropped something he was showing us, and we both dived down to get it, our heads meeting with a resounding crash, but we had the presence of mind not to start roaring till Mother had rushed us out of the room and shut the door.

When there was an evening party at Charles Street we used to have a marvellous time, as we insisted on sleeping in Mother's room, and there was a big double door between it and the green room, which again opened into the big drawing-room and on into a large blue drawing-room at the back. Mother used to arrange a screen round the open bedroom door, and we sat behind it on two little chairs in our dressing-gowns and peeped through the hinges of the screen while she went round telling our particular friends to slip round and see us. We kept her so busy doing our messages that she hardly had time to say How-de-do and Good-bye to the other guests. In those days you just had a party or "drum," and everyone talked, but no other amusement was offered except sometimes there would be a band.

Every morning we went to feed the ducks in St. James's Park; we had hoops, and our great joy was to let them loose at the top of the Duke of York steps and

see them bowl down on their own, bouncing off all the people coming up, or flying between the legs of furious old gentlemen. Our governess always scolded us, but we declared that we had let go of them by mistake. There was a little chalet on the bit of grass in front of the Admiralty, near what is now the Admiralty Arch, but of course there was no entry there then. Behind the chalet was a cow tethered on the grass, and the old woman used to go out and milk the cow for us when we wanted a drink. She was very kind, but we suspected her of adding water to the glass of milk on her way through the chalet, as there was always a pause and a clink as of tin cans.

When I was eight and Susan ten, Mother gave us an allowance of eight pounds a year for our underclothes ; of course, things were much cheaper then, and underclothes were very plain and made of stiff white stuff, but you had clean ones on every day. My father used to chaff the life out of us, but he didn't mind how much we chaffed him back again. Once he got hold of a bill of mine for fifteen pairs of what we called "Panties" in those days, and so of course he led me a life about these, and kept on saying he could understand having fourteen pairs, one for every day and seven in the wash, but why fifteen, to which with great embarrassment I replied, "Well, you see, one pair is—in case——" I always left the end of my sentences unfinished.

Our canary was very tame, and one day when he was let out into the schoolroom, we realized to our horror that the window was open. One of us crept round and shut it, thus saving the situation, but I gave a very dramatic description of it afterwards, ending up with, "But oh, Papa, it was a narrow——" "A

narrow what ? ” “ Narrow excape.” Directly I got my allowance I started an account at Gorrings’s shop, which was much smaller then, but it is rather a record to have had an account with any shop for forty-four years, at my age. I remember writing for riding stays, and of course my father managed to get hold of Gorrings’s answer, saying they were sorry that riding stays were not made in that size, to my great rage and mortification.

The one chaff we could not stand was about two little marble children on the mantelpiece of the dining-room at Curraghmore. People used to admire them, and our hearts always sank, as we knew quite well it would start my father off saying that when Susan and I were babies, he had these little marble figures made of us, and he said it so seriously and naturally that they never realized he was pulling their legs. They would go over to look closer at them, saying, “ How interesting ! ” and as the babies were stark naked and obviously of the male sex, Susan and I used to die of shame. Mother generally came to the rescue, and sent us quickly on imaginary messages, in case we broke down completely. We were very prudish, and used to often chide Papa if he made any indelicate remark ; another relentless chaff that tried me very high was when he told people that I was going to marry Frederick Gorrings, because I once said I thought Cedric a lovely name, after reading *Little Lord Fauntleroy*. He would declare that the other shops would be godfathers to my children, and that they would be all twins and christened Swan & Edgar, Swears & Wells, Marshall & Snelgrove, etc. He said he was sure Snelgrove would be called Snellie for short, and would always have a dirty nose,

CHAPTER IV

SUSAN and I were very lucky in the way of uncles ; we had the most amusing collection that anyone could wish to have. Our Beresford ones could really be called perfect relations : they forgot all about us when they didn't see us, and when we did meet they received us with shouts of joy ; no one could want better than that. As a rule relations spend their time being disagreeable to you when they see you, and complaining bitterly that you never come near them at other times. Somebody said that one Beresford was all right, but more than that was too much, and really, when they got together, no one could help being exhausted with laughing. It was generally at family funerals that they all collected at Curraghmore, and even though they were frightfully upset, they couldn't help being so terribly funny. My father was devoted to them, and they all adored each other. They had the most extraordinary habit of chewing a toothpick all day long. Mother said that she once went to Paris with all four of them, and it was the most tiring experience ; my father, who was a huge man, strode ahead, and the others trailed behind in a long line, ending up with Uncle Charlie, who rolled slowly along in true sailor fashion.

Sometimes, if we were walking along Bond Street or Piccadilly, there would be the most awful commotion and shouts, a hansom-cab would pull up alongside, the horse nearly sitting down and slithering along, out would fall one of the uncles, throw his arms round



LORD WILIAM BERFSFORD V C

LORD MARCUS BERFSFORD

one's neck, and slowly weave up and down in a frenzy of delight to see one again, regardless of the fact that he probably lived quite near, and could easily see us every day if he wanted to. I think Uncle Bill Beresford was really our favourite of the lot. He was in the 9th Lancers, and fought in the Zulu War, where he got the Victoria Cross, at the Battle of Ulundi. I believe they had charged right through the Zulus to get to the main forces, and when they looked back saw that a sergeant was lying wounded, with his horse killed under him, far behind the Zulu lines. Uncle Bill turned his horse round and charged back again to where the sergeant was lying, and bending down began to pull him up behind him. The man said, "No, go back, my lord, your horse would never get through again with two men on his back;" but Uncle Bill said, "You get up, or I'll punch your head," so he pulled him on and charged through again with the wounded man holding on round his waist. When people spoke of this to him he always made light of it, and said he had been so frightened of his father when he was a boy that a few Zulus were nothing compared to it. When Uncle Bill was out in India he went on the Viceroy's staff, and was there under five different Viceroys, ending up by being Military Secretary to Lord Dufferin and Lord Lansdowne. He told a story about a soldier servant of his who asked if he could have leave to go on a picnic party. Bill was always terribly nice to everyone, and took any amount of trouble, so he said of course he could, and that if he told him how many people there would be, he would order the food, etc., for the party. His servant, who was really going to take his best girl out, looked very shy and said, "Well, to tell the truth, my lord, it's just me and another."

Uncle Bill did not know much about art, music, or furniture. When he was not sure if any "piece" was Louis Quinze or Louis Seize, he would get out of his difficulties by combining the two into Louis "Singe," and the only way he was able to recognize any tune, even "God Save the Queen," was by noticing that everyone got up and stood, but he seems to have been a genius at doing accounts. While he was at Eton his father was very strict that all pocket-money should be accounted for to the last farthing, and it was Uncle Bill's great brain which evolved the item, "Gave a little cad sixpence," when he was faced with this serious deficit in his little book !

Uncle Charlie Beresford was marvellous too, but in quite a different way. I believe he was very delicate when he was young, and the first time he walked on to a battleship as a small boy of eleven, he overheard a huge sailor remark to a friend, "That little chap ain't long for this world" ; however, the life seems to have suited him, as he hardly ever had a day's illness after he went to sea. He certainly didn't understand being ill at all, because I remember his being out in Egypt when we were there in 1893, and getting a slight attack of influenza at Luxor, which he evidently looked on as the greatest outrage. When the doctor told him to be careful not to catch cold after it, he would ride about on a donkey dressed in a sun-helmet, a huge coat, a muffler, and fur gloves, as he said you couldn't be too careful. I suppose nearly everybody knows about the time he imitated Nelson at the Siege of Alexandria. He was Captain of the Gunboat *Condor* then, and he had a sort of idea that the huge guns which were blazing away at our fleet were probably too old to be able to swivel round like the new-fashioned

ones did. Anyhow, he took a chance, and started out to run for it, getting between the guns. The Admiral saw the gunboat going, and put up a signal, "Come back, *Condor*." Uncle Charlie hadn't got a blind eye like Nelson to look at the signal with, so he did the next best thing, and put the signalman under arrest to prevent him reading it off. Luckily the guns could not move round, or of course the boat would have been blown to pieces in two minutes, so he was able to run backwards and forwards pounding away at the land forces until they had to give in. When the signal was hauled down, and another one of "Well done, *Condor*," went up, he released his signalman to read it.

Uncle Charlie used to do all kinds of wild things when he was on land. Once he rode down Park Lane on a pig for a bet; he said it was very slippery to sit on, and made a frightful row. The owner, who was driving a lot of pigs to market, pursued him shouting, which frightened the pig so much it flew along at a frightful pace, like a racehorse.

Uncle Charlie married in 1878 Mina Gardner, who was an heiress. She had a great mania for collecting French furniture, and Charlie used to show one round with the greatest pride, saying, "Dear little Dot, isn't she clever—isn't it lovely?" Then, after a pause, "And not a comfortable chair in the house!" Aunt Mina was the only person I ever met who wore a black nightgown as mourning for her husband.

They had a house in Eaton Square one time, and their eldest child, Kathleen, was about the same age as I was, so we used to go there a lot. Uncle Charlie had brought a Chinese boy called Tom Fat back with him from China, and he used to play hide and seek

with us. He always hid me in a dirty clothes-basket, which creaked when I breathed. I believe Uncle Charlie taught him how to write English with great care in his own handwriting, and then was immensely surprised when Tom forged his name on a lot of cheques.

Kathleen was rather delicate, and used to have congestion of the lungs. She gave herself frightful airs about it ; we thought it awfully smart to have an illness, and wished we could have one too. Our dolls were always supposed to have the most devastating diseases ; I remember Susan's doll had smallpox, but I was determined to go one better, so my " Primrose " had a sunstroke. However, I shall always feel that Susan behaved rather meanly over this master-stroke of mine. She declared that " Primrose " could not have had one, as people never recovered from sunstrokes. Poor " Primrose " was supposed to have a chill one day, and I sat her too close to the fire ; her face being made of wax, the nose melted, which gave her a very unfortunate appearance ; my father tactlessly referred to her as " Prim-nose " after that, which wounded me deeply. Kathleen chose this moment to have another of her " congestions," and called night and day for " Clodagh's doll." I knew perfectly well that " Primrose " was the one wanted, but with infinite guile and cunning I pretended that it must be " Scotchy," a boy in a kilt. I hated parting with him too, but still I had to take him round to Eaton Square, as everybody took it for granted that that was the correct thing to do. I hoped that Kathleen would be in too high a fever to notice the difference. She always bucked about having a temperature of 104°, which made us feel quite hopeless of ever cutting her



THE LORD CHARLES BERESFORD
(Created Lord Beresford 1916)

out in that direction. I had 'flu once, but unfortunately my temperature went down instead of up, which wasn't nearly so smart.

We had very few toys in those days. I always longed to have toy soldiers, but I never got any, and I suppose my brother never was given any either, or else I should have begged them when he went to school ; but we had a marvellous collection of small dolls called the "Puppets," forty-nine of them, a whole village, and they had such individual characters that they became quite as if they were alive. There were Lord and Lady Stag, their eldest son was Lord Fawn, and his sisters the Ladies Doe ; then there was Dr. King, who lost his head, so he had to have a paper one stuck on ; he had a son called Jack, and the clergyman's name was Mr. Hill. My father and mother used to ask them down sometimes, and once when Lord and Lady Stag came to dinner, Mother would keep asking her tactless questions about her eldest daughter, Lady Florentia Doe, who had tumbled down at the back of the cupboard and been lost for weeks. The most extraordinary coincidence about it was that her brother's tutor was lost at the same time, and Lady Stag was very upset about it. Mother woke up in the night after this dinner-party and was seized with remorse at having been so rude to poor Lady Stag : having never been unkind to any living soul in all her life, she could not get over it.

I remember there being bread riots in London, and hearing awful stories of ladies in Victorias being attacked, the coachmen being hauled off the boxes and all their clothes torn off, which shocked us very deeply. Our governess took us into the Mall for walks to avoid the streets, as that was considered safer. In those

days the Mall had avenues of huge trees ; the only bit where carriages could go was quite a narrow drive near Green Park railings, and there was hardly any traffic. Judging by the old prints of the time of Charles II, it must have been almost exactly the same as in those days, only there were not any kings and courtiers parading up and down. It was very sad to see them cutting down all the lovely old trees when it was altered to suit modern conditions. Sometimes, even in the Mall, we heard the angry roar of the rioters in the distance—how we used to fly home, in a panic, and the relief when we were inside the house with all the shutters put up on the windows ! I recollect so well sitting and shivering in the dimly lighted schoolroom and hearing the mob go by.

Mother was rather delicate and used to get bronchitis, and Papa, being an invalid too, we were always roped in to help. We wrote their letters : sometimes they dictated them to us, sometimes Mother just wrote over the top “ Answer this and tell them about —— ” or else we used to fill in their cheques or copy out things. We never had much education of the ordinary kind, as Mother’s idea of choosing a governess was always that someone had had a nervous breakdown or typhoid fever and needed a long rest. “ What a good idea ! Of course she can come and be governess to the children.” Even our Darling Skom, I think, had had an illness of some kind, as she had short curly hair, which was most unusual in those days. We had a year of perfect bliss with her when I was seven, and she actually taught us something, which was very clever of her ; but to our great sorrow she had to go and help her sister with a school when I was eight, and left us broken-hearted. How well I remember that sad day

of parting, and how we were sent down to tea with "little friends" in the village to distract our attention, and how we cried when we got home and found her gone!

At one time we had a governess called Miss Nicholson, who was rather elderly and wore a bustle. She was always telling us about some marvellously good and perfect children at her last situation called May and Boysy, and our hatred of these infuriating creatures was so intense that even now I can scarcely speak calmly about them. The awful part was that some years afterwards we met some children, who showed the most frightful loathing for us directly they heard our names, which led to the discovery that Miss Nicholson had passed on to these people after leaving us, and made their lives hideous with tales of our perfections. This gave us a great shock, and was a lesson to us never to praise anybody, a precept I have tried to adhere to ever since. Years afterwards, when I was married, we had a housemaid called Annie who had been with some people called Sir Thornley and Lady Stoker and also with Mr. Cyril Maude, the celebrated actor, and his wife. Annie was a good conversationalist, and I do not believe there was anything that was hid from me about these two families. When I became acquainted with Cyril Maude I broke to him gently about Annie, and warned him that his every thought and deed were well known to me. At first he looked puzzled, but suddenly a dawning look of horror spread over his face, and he whispered anxiously to me, "Did you ever hear anything about Sir Thornley and Lady Stoker?" I pressed his hand in silent sympathy!

Miss Nicholson used to take us to the National

Gallery if it was wet, and sometimes to the Aquarium, which was somewhere near Westminster Abbey at that time ; I do not think that there were any fishes in that aquarium, but there were generally a lovely tiger lady and a couple of giants, sometimes a few dwarfs, who fought and slapped each other like naughty children, and acrobats swinging about in the roof and jumping into a net. All very exciting and wonderful.

We were very badly dressed always, and I must say Mother was not very dressy herself, one reason being that she spent all her allowance on helping people who were down on their luck, and the other that her usual reason for going to any dressmaker at all was the fact that the latter was starving (probably because she was so bad that no one else would go). My father declared that the first time he saw my mother, he remarked to someone that she was a nice girl but badly dressed. She had on a white muslin frock with a pink sash, and was very much excited at the thought of seeing this young man, so dressed up, very smartly as she thought, but was rather dashed by her old nurse saying dryly, " Well, no one can say you aren't clean," as she started to go downstairs.

Mother had a little dog called " Tiger," who took an instantaneous dislike to my father, which was rather unfortunate ; however, she did her best to suppress his growls, and when Papa asked politely what his name was, she prevaricated somewhat, and said she always called him " Tye," this because she knew that my father was called by that name, it being short for " Ty-rone." Mother was only just eighteen, and had known the other Beresford brothers for some time. Her very worldly old grandmother used to say, " My dear, you can flirt with these little men, but you must marry their

elder brother," so of course she was thrilled at the idea of meeting him. He was six feet four and a half inches tall, and had thick auburn curly hair, and a marvellous figure, just like a prince in a fairy-tale. Mother declared that she was very old for her age, but my father used to tease her, and say that when they went off for their honeymoon and got to the station, she was such a baby that she pointed at the train and said, "Der de puff-puff." Her eighteenth birthday was on March 26th, 1874, and she went out in London that summer. They had a box at Ascot, and Papa chose that unromantic spot to propose to her, with book-makers roaring "Two to one bar one" just below, and a frightful hubbub going on all round. Mother was so afraid of accepting a purely imaginary proposal that she kept on saying, "What did you say?" until she was sure that he meant it. They were married in July, and Mother had a trousseau costing a thousand pounds, but my father said that she gave away all her clothes to people who needed them, and declared that he had to go out and buy her a flannel petticoat a year or so later at Homburg, where she had typhoid fever. I believe she was terribly ill for ever so long, and at last, when she was really out of danger, the doctor said, "I think to-day you can have something good to eat," expecting her to ask for a lightly boiled egg, but Mother was ravenously hungry, and called loudly for boiled rabbit and sausages, being furious when she did not get them.

Most of Mother's dress allowance went on kind deeds. I remember somebody called Mayhew, who was in Colney Hatch Asylum, and wanted to come out, also a girl who wanted a job, and an elderly woman always alluded to as "Pitney's sister," who was looking for a comfy home, so Mother combined the lot by taking a

small house, extracting Mayhew out of the asylum, putting Pitney's sister to watch over her, and the girl to cook. My father led her an awful life over this arrangement, as he would have it that the girl threw a tea-pot of scalding tea over Mayhew, who, maddened by pain, bit a piece out of Pitney's sister's leg ; anyhow, whatever really did happen, it is certain that Mayhew was returned in a crate to Colney Hatch, and the partnership was completely broken up.

It must have been about this time that Jerome K. Jerome's book *Three Men in a Boat* came out and caused a huge sensation, as it was the first book of its kind that really set out to make one laugh. I always associate it with Mayhew, because Mother was going down to the asylum to see her when she was reading it. She took it in the train with her, and was too engrossed to notice passing the station, or even being shunted on to a siding, but presently, when she was laughing quite out loud to herself over the book, the carriage door opened, and a porter stood gazing at her in amazement, the rest of the train being completely empty. He asked her where she was going, and when she realized where she was and saw his astonished face, she literally didn't dare to answer " Colney Hatch," it seemed such an obvious destination, so she mentioned some other place farther on, and had to drive back for miles in a fly. Scornful people in those days used to criticize Jerome's books and say they were written from a bank clerk's point of view, but I think it was that very reason that made them so pricelessly human and amusing. Nearly all the new books then were written in such a lofty manner, either about haughty rich people or poor little governesses who married the heir and became reigning beauties ; tragic and gruesome stories about " the



LADY BLANCHE SOMERSET
Afterwards Marchioness of Waterford

poor"—none of them very like real life—so Jerome's lighter point of view was an absolute godsend.

The London season in those days used to go on for months and months, from Easter right on to the end of July, which was very boring for us, as we longed to get into the country, and of course there being no motors or easy services of local trains, there was no chance of going down for the day. Even Ranelagh was quite an expedition, and garden-parties at Osterleigh or Sion meant a very long drive, with high-stepping grey horses, more for show than speed. A drive round Hyde Park was quite an afternoon's pleasure, and on summer afternoons it was crowded with two streams of smart victorias and barouches driving slowly and solemnly round in different directions, ladies bowing to their friends, the great excitement of seeing the Princess of Wales and her daughters, and the agony of all the social climbers as to whether she would bow to them or not. Two girls we knew once bowed so low to the Princess, when they were sitting opposite to each other, that some wired flower trimming on their large hats got entangled, and they could not sit up again; they got the giggles and were quite helpless. Their mother tried to disentangle them, but I never heard if she succeeded or if they had to stop the carriage and get the footman off the box to take a hand.

We used to play a trick on very pompous-looking coachmen and footmen when we were walking along the path by Hamilton Gardens; if they looked too proud and scornful, we would suddenly look down at the horses' legs with very worried faces, and drawing each other's attention, stop and stare. The coachman and the footman would come off their proud fit, and start looking down, trying to see what was the matter,

sometimes even pulling up to find out what was wrong. We used to try this trick on Mother sometimes when we wanted to tease her ; sitting with our backs to the horses, suddenly one of us would look up at her bonnet in a puzzled and worried way, and put our head on one side as if there was something a little wrong ; then the other one would look too in a critical way, and Mother would hurriedly say, " Is my bonnet on crooked, or have I got a smut on my nose ? " We used to answer in kind, reassuring voices, " Don't worry, Mother, it's all right really," sounding as unconvincingly as possible. Of course, in those days there were no such things as vanity bags, so she couldn't possibly look to see what was wrong. The funny part was that, though we all chaffed about it to Papa afterwards in front of her, however often we did it, she was always taken in, and used to giggle feebly, and say, " You horrible children, I don't believe there is anything the matter," but all the same she kept on putting up her hand and feeling if her bonnet was really straight or not.

When we were small we always sat up in the hood of the victoria with our legs dangling down the back, which must have been very uncomfortable for Mother and any friend who was driving with her ; however, in those days it was not the thing to lean back ; you had to sit up, not stiffly, but in a *dégagé* manner. Stiffness was a sign that you were not accustomed " to carriage exercise," and to lounge was very vulgar, and showed that you had hired the carriage for the afternoon.

We used to go and play in Hamilton Gardens sometimes, which was a very smart affair ; we had not got a key, but we had lots of friends inside, and we used to bob up and down outside the gate until they let us in. Our cousin Birdie Stewart, who lived opposite at

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Londonderry House, was very kind, and always kept a look-out for us ; also Eve and Mab Crichton, the Erne children, Agatha Thynne (now Lady Hindlip), and all the Jersey girls, Markie, Mary, and Bertie (now Lady Dynevor, Lady Longford, and Lady Dunsany). We always played flags, and the big ones used to pick up sides ; it was my one ambition in life that some day I should be the eldest and do the picking, but I don't think I ever was.

CHAPTER V

WHEN we were at Curraghmore my father used to go about in a Bath chair, which was pulled by a donkey and attended on by one of the stupidest boys that ever was born. One day he appeared with large spots all over his face. Papa said, "Have you the 'maysles' [measles], boy?" but Johnny Crotty answered, "No, mi-lard, 'tis but the hate [heat] of the blood." You might think that it would be easy to elude this little cavalcade, but not at all; my father had a perfect genius for turning up where he was least expected, and whenever we were doing forbidden things he would come swerving round the corner at a hand gallop, holding an enormous ashplant as a whip, with which he beat the front of the Bath chair, causing the donkey to race along as if fleeing from demons, the boy running behind. Papa had a huge voice, and sometimes you could hear the roaring before you actually saw him, which was a great help towards a good get-away. He never roared anything particular—just roared, and everybody ran like ants in all directions. The great thing was to escape quickly, as his fury lasted only a short time, and half an hour after when you saw him again you could chaff him about the whole thing, and he didn't mind a bit.

He gave us a little pack of hounds, twelve and a half couple, and we used to hunt them all about the domain. Duke, the old huntsman of the original Curraghmore hounds, was pensioned off and lived down at the kennels, so he hunted our little pack. My brother

Tyrone was first whip during the holidays and Susan was second, so I had to be the kennel boy ; but when Tyrone returned to school Susan and I both went up a peg and became first and second whips.

There is a little wood called the Wilderness on the right of the house looking towards the lake, in which we nearly always found a fox, but unfortunately there were two ornamental terraces of grass between the path and the wood, and the only way of getting across these was by going up some very steep flights of stone steps, flanked on either side by statues of terrible snarling wild boars and other furious beasts in deadly combat.

To get into the Wilderness we had to go right round by the road, so it was always a moot point whether to do that and get away quickly if the fox ran out into the park, or to stay near the house and trust that he would break cover towards the lake.

One day, when some officers from Clonmel were staying at Curraghmore, they came out hunting with our little pack, mounted on enormous grey carriage horses. They followed Susan and I, and we all sat on our horses near the house looking anxiously up the central ride of the wood, while Duke put the hounds in at the far end. Suddenly there was a view-hollow from Tyrone, and the fox crossed the ride and went off in the opposite direction. Instead of turning and racing round by the road, as we were supposed to do, Susan and I looked quickly to right and left, and seeing no sign of Papa, set our ponies at the steps, and were half-way up, our ponies' hind legs cutting great chunks out of them, before we heard a roar as of thunder, and saw him galloping at full speed ; we dug our heels into the ponies' sides, scrambled to the top, and fled while the going was good. The unfortunate soldiers, think-

ing no evil, were just starting to follow us up the steps ; however, they pulled back their horses, and being unaccustomed to the family habits, went towards my father, under the impression that he was calling to them, thus receiving the full flood of his wrath on to their innocent heads. They eventually joined up with us again by a more conventional route, and we hunted on till lunch-time, but when we all came in at two o'clock they evidently expected a frightful row, and were thunderstruck when we started chaffing my father over our escapade. I think they were feeling rather aggrieved over our having left them so basely to their fate, and hoped that we should get it in the neck too.

We were always supposed to get back from hunting in time for luncheon, and when we did, everything was all right. We were even let off our afternoon lessons on the score of being tired, but woe betide us if we ran out of the domain and didn't turn up till four o'clock or later ; on these occasions we generally came in very unobtrusively, and tried to nip in by the back door and up the stone stairs. In any case, we got a very chilly reception, and however tired we were, all our lessons had to be done in an atmosphere of great gloom. I suppose this really was on account of it not being very safe for us to be loose about the countryside. I remember one day, when we had run all the way to Carrick-on-Suir, a whole lot of bad boys lay in wait for us on a heap of stones at a hairpin turn in the road. It was on the long hill running up from the town, and they stoned us as we came up to the corner ; of course, we didn't think of any danger, and were so indignant that we galloped at them on our little ponies, putting them to flight with our hunting whips. There were strict orders that the hounds were to be whipped

off at once if we ran outside the domain wall, but we never did this, and old Duke encouraged us and never attempted to stop the hounds either.

When Tyrone was back for the holidays we used to hunt three days a week, but we went out hunting only one day as a rule ; sometimes, if it was absolutely pelt-ing with rain, an awful message used to come up that my father had put off the hounds till the next day ; this was a terribly serious matter for us, as we never learnt our lessons the evening before hunting, knowing that we should not have to say them, and we probably hadn't the faintest idea of what they were about, so it took a lot of tact and cunning to get away with it. One German-Swiss governess we had was fairly easy game, as she adored talking of clothes, or about young men, who she imagined loved her, and we used to be very nippy at starting her off on to one subject or the other, and so got through without showing our ignorance. I was very lazy even on ordinary evenings, and used to just read my lessons through once and hope for the best with the aid of a fairly good memory, but unfortunately Susan was a very painstaking, conscientious child. She would work away hard, and really try to learn all these unnecessary things. The most embarrassing moment was when she asked Miss Reiter the explanation of something in the book, and I felt down my spine the inevitable summons, " Clodagh, do you know what that means ? " Of course, I had put my books away long ago, and could not admit that I hadn't noticed it at all ; all the same, I sometimes managed to escape by looking very innocent while I gave some not too obviously chancy explanation, and then taking great and fervent interest in the real one when it was revealed to us both.

I had a terrible habit of being interested in the parts

of history at which we were not working at the time. If I was supposed to be doing my preparation about Henry VIII, you may be sure I was deep among the Ancient Britons. On other occasions, if we were naughty the hunting used to be stopped as a punishment, but as the hounds had to be exercised, we just hunted the next day instead, so we didn't mind so much except for those blasted lessons. I remember the hounds being sent back and our both being put to bed at eleven o'clock one morning because I bit a piece out of Susan's arm going up the stairs. Mother said she was sure I wouldn't have done it if Susan had not annoyed me, which was very true, and I personally thought it so right of Mother to punish us both, but I don't think Susan was quite so sure about this.

I had a little pony called "Nelly," and I have still got one of her tiny hoofs mounted as an inkstand; my father had it done for me when she died, but he would insist on having engraved on the lid, "Nelly, favourite pony of Clodagh Beresford—died of fright at meeting a bread cart," which was very trying, as of course it was really I who had "died of fright" when Nelly shied at a bright yellow bread cart, and disgraced myself by falling off in the excitement of the moment, all of which he knew quite well.

Colonel Crane always tells a story about me riding austere towards him and Susan, when they returned from following two and a half couple of hounds who had gone after a fresh fox, and saying coldly, "I suppose you know that such things are not done out hunting," with awful hauteur. He is a rather large man, and was riding a huge horse, and I was a tiny figure on the famous "Nelly," but he says he never in his life felt so utterly small and guilty.

We had a marvellous old groom called Paddy Quinn, who was absolutely unique ; he was the same one who sold the bad-tempered horse at Carmee Fair, as belonging to " a blind widow by the say." When Tyrone was a tiny boy, Paddy used to lead him about on a donkey, and even went in for giving him lessons in manners such as " Take your hat off to Grandmama, Sonny," when Granny Beaufort met them on the road. Tyrone was always " Sonny " all his life to Paddy Quinn, and Susan and I were each " My pet." We once went riding on the racecourse, where a stallion had been put out to grass without our knowledge, and this horse attacked Paddy and nearly killed him, but all the time he fought with the horse he never lost his head, but just said to us, " Never fear, my pet ; will you get the other side of the gate, and I'll soon be with you," and he did manage to get himself and us safely away somehow. The first winter we had the hounds they were only harriers, and so even when we did kill a fox they would not break him up properly. One day after a kill Duke hung the poor corpse on a tree after cutting off his mask, brush, and pads for our benefit. Later in the year my father had the diabolic idea of playing a joke on Duke, and sending the remains of this fox to him, marked " Game." Many old hunting people were in the habit of sending him haunches of venison and presents of game, so that it would be quite easy to take him in. With this in view Papa told us to take a sack and go and see if we could find the fox. Paddy was let into the secret, and when we got to the tree the remains were still there, but they were not in a very pleasant condition, and we stayed a little way off while Paddy hooked it down. He seized it in his arms, to our horror, so we shouted, " Don't touch it, Paddy ; poke

it into the sack with your stick," but he was quite impervious to such things. "Ah, sure," says Paddy, "I wouldn't bear the poor fellow any malice."

Paddy was inclined to drink a bit sometimes, and when he turned up at Curraghmore in that condition my father always sacked him as a matter of course, knowing from experience that the following Monday back he would come again as if nothing had happened. Sometimes Papa used to say to him for fun, "Hello, Paddy, what are you doing up here? I thought I sacked you last Thursday," upon which old Paddy would give a toothless grin and answer, "Ah, sure, I wouldn't mind you, mi-lard." Years afterwards, when we were nearly grown up, poor Paddy got so old and ill that he couldn't work any more; he was given a pension, and as he had no one to look after him, Mother took him into a hospital she had started in the village, but having nothing to do and the pension money to spend with no expenses of living to pay for, Paddy fell from grace, and one Christmas Day, armed with bottles and bottles of whisky which he had secretly collected, he toddled round to the other old people who were in bed at the hospital, and made them all roaring drunk. The whole place absolutely rocked, there was a terrible uproar, and much scandal in the village. Poor Paddy was expelled with contumely. He came up to Curraghmore a few days afterwards to get my father to intercede with Mother and let him go back. In the Avenue he met Tyrone, who said to him, "Well, Paddy, I hear you're in trouble," to which Paddy answered sadly, "I am, Sonny; I committed meself," and seemed very down on his luck and ashamed, but when Tyrone asked him under his breath, "If you got the chance, Paddy, would you do

it again ? ” a twinkle appeared in the old man’s eye, and he whispered back, “ I would, Sonny.” Mother relented after a bit, and he went back to the hospital, but she kept his pension and just doled it out to him in small sums for tobacco, so that he wouldn’t be tempted again.

My father had various little idiosyncrasies, which must have been rather embarrassing for our governesses. He always would eat a piece of toast in two bites, not three-cornered looking toast either, but large square bits. It was Susan’s and my great ambition to equal him in this, and our efforts were persistent and worthy of a better cause. Our governess used to say, “ Children, what are you doing ? I never saw such manners and behaviour,” and our reply that “ Papa does it ” must have been rather difficult to counter, as she probably had quite definite views about his doing it either, but the inevitable “ That’s very different ” had to suffice.

My father had had his tonsils operated on, which apparently was quite a rare achievement in those days. He kept the tonsils in a bottle locked away in a cupboard, and it was looked on as a great treat for us to be shown them once a year on his birthday. I think this curious trait must run in my family, as my son Hugo, when he had his appendix taken out at the age of twelve, insisted on keeping it in a bottle in the dining-room at Ballysaggartmore, and showing it with much pride to all visitors, thereby completely putting them off their lunch.

We had a rather stiff and pious old Bishop in Waterford when we were small children ; sometimes he and his very proper wife used to drive out to lunch at Curraghmore. One day they turned up on a Saturday ;

Papa always went to the office in the yard on that day and saw any of his tenants or employees who had a grievance or wanted anything special, so he was late for lunch. The Bishop insisted on saying grace, so we all stood up round the table, and he went on and on with his little prayer till my father came striding into the room. He did not know about the visitors, and seeing us standing up in this insane manner, said at the top of his voice, "What the devil is all this?" The Bishop paused in astonishment, so we hurriedly said "Amen" and sat down.

When Tyrone was home from school he often got up concerts in the barrack-room, so called because it was used for visiting maids if the house was very full, and had two curtains that could be drawn across to make partitions and divide the room up into three. One end of this made a good stage, and we would go round and collect kitchenmaids, housemaids, and laundrymaids, and give them an entertainment. The only difficulty was to get them to go at the end; they just sat on and waited for the next item, there being no programme to inform them which was the last, so we tried to give them a hint by singing "God Save the Queen" behind the curtains. Unfortunately, we began in rather too high a key, getting very squeaky at the beginning of "Send her victorious" and completely breaking down after that, but our audience, poor things, were so inured to the horrors of our concerts that even that did not move them, they just clapped politely, and waited for the next "turn." In the end we felt so desperate we just crept silently away through the half-open door and left them to their fate, hoping that it would penetrate to their minds in time that the concert was ended.

CHAPTER VI

MOTHER was one of the first people to start collecting old furniture, and she picked up the most lovely things for practically nothing. When she came to Curraghmore first, it was all done up and furnished in very early Victorian style, drawing-room papered in white with gold stars, and all the heavy old picture frames hung on the walls with pink ribbon concealing the cord. My father thought it was all very nice, and as it was clean it was difficult to advance any reason for removing it, but she did her best by rubbing her hands on bits of it whenever they were dirty, to further the good work. Susan and I did not altogether approve of the old things, however good, in those days ; some of the Chippendale bow-fronted chests of drawers that Mother delighted in only had bits of string instead of handles, and we thought this highly infradigue. An old Aubusson carpet we had in our bedroom was also much disapproved of, and we wished we could have a lovely new pile carpet, soft and comforting for bare-feet. I must say, apart from their beauty, that I do, even now, think their texture rather stringy to walk about on in a bedroom. Mother was very interested in "British Israel," and was frightfully keen that the prophecy about "a King called David reigning in Jerusalem" should apply to our Royal Family. She persuaded the Princess of Wales (Queen Alexandra) that this was terribly important, and that was the origin of our present Prince of Wales being called David. They discussed together how they could manage to

bring the name in, and it was Mother who thought of the four patron saints—George, Andrew, Patrick, and David—which made it possible to include it.

Everybody used to come and confide their griefs to Mother, and she was always hauling people out of unbelievable disasters and messes which they had generally managed to get themselves plunged into. She had the most unlikely friends, good and bad, who all adored her equally. One old clergyman wrote her a letter full of gratitude for something she had done to help him, and at the end of his letter added, "All I think of you is written in the — verse — chapter of Deuteronomy." No one else but Mother would have bothered to look up this text, but she was very touched and pleased, until she found it to be, "Cursed is he who moveth his neighbour's landmark"!! which didn't seem very applicable to the case in point. However, she didn't like to hurt the old man's feelings by drawing attention to his mistake. Another friend of hers was a poacher called Cooney, and whenever he was arrested all he would answer to any question was, "Well now—there's a kind lady —." As he always came up before my father and the other magistrates, it was all very difficult. However, Mother used to beg him off, and the last time she gave him a good lecture and said, "Now, Cooney, if I can get you off this time, will you promise me you will never go poaching again?" but all he would say was, "I'll never be cot [caught] again," and he never was.

In those days everybody ate much more than they do now, an enormous breakfast with a huge long row of about eight dishes on a heater, boiled eggs in a china hen, and an enormous sideboard with every

conceivable cold stuff on it. Then luncheon at two, with entrées and joints and the sideboard as before ; huge tea at five, and finally dinner at eight, with endless courses—soup, fish, a sort of chicken entrée, a meat entrée, roast, bird, sweet savoury, biscuits and cheese, and dessert ; it makes one ache to think of the waste of it all and the time it took. Mother never ate much, and she used to get so bored sitting doing nothing that she always brought her knitting and worked. It reminded me so much of her when people did it in the War. Susan and I always came down to dinner, but had only fish and dessert. We sat one on each side of Papa, and were supposed to go to bed at eight-thirty, but our one ambition was to stay on, and if everyone was talking they very often didn't notice the time. In fact, it was generally our own agonized faces which reminded them when the clock struck so unnecessarily loud, as we thought.

Mother was a very difficult person to find a present for ; she really didn't like or need anything except a lead pencil. This was rather convenient in a way, as one present did for the whole family at Christmas. We gave it to Papa first, and he said thank you and left it on the breakfast table. Tyrone was the next to get it, but he was so vague, one could take it away from him in a few minutes if he wasn't looking. Then it travelled up to Mother's bedroom, as she was always late. She said it was awfully nice, and put it away in a drawer. Sometimes we got it out again, if there was anyone else we wanted to give a present to, but very often it stayed in the drawer till it was wanted to go the rounds again the following Christmas. With a pencil, however, it was very different : no lead pencil was safe from Mother whoever it belonged to ; even the sacred ones

in Papa's despatch-box, locked with a key worn in a ring on his little finger, have been known to disappear ; in fact, my father used to firmly send one of us in charge of the ring when he wanted anything out of the box, ignoring Mother's offer of help in this direction. Luckily our passion for pencils had not really developed at that time, so we were looked on as fit for the trust.

Among the people who came to stay at Curraghmore was a cousin, who was a great friend of ours, called Emily Beresford (now Lady Hodson). She had a marvellous piece of poetry we used to make her recite to us very often. It was a parody written at the time that Louis-Philippe was supposed to have come over to see Queen Victoria after he fled from France. I can remember a bit of it now :

“ Arrah ! my dear Vic.—sez he,
I'm mighty sick—sez he,
Since I cut me stick—sez he,
Tarnation quick—sez he,
From the devil's breeze—sez he,
At the Tooleries—sez he,
For the Blackguards made—sez he,
A barricade—sez he.
And I was afraid—sez he,
And greatly in dread—sez he,
That I'd lose me head—sez he,
And sure if I lost that—sez he,
I'd have no place for me hat—sez he.
Now sit down awhile—sez she,
And take off your tile—sez she,
For you've come a peg down—sez she,
By the loss of your Crown—sez she.
Arrah ! Mille pardon—sez he,
For keeping it on—sez he,
But since I took flight—sez he,
Me head's not quite right—sez he,

For I'm dead bate [beat]—sez he,
And as cold as ice—sez he.
Never say it twice—sez she.
I'll cut you a slice—sez she,
Of something nice—sez she,
And I'll shake down a bed—sez she,
In the room overhead—sez she."
Etc., etc.

I believe there was a sort of parody on this much later, at a time when Yeats the Irish poet wrote a letter in the *Irish Times* in which he criticized Queen Victoria, and part of the verse went—

" He ought to be at home—sez she,
French polishing his poem—sez she,
Instead of writing letters—sez she,
About his betters—sez she,
And parading me crimes—says she,
In the *Irish Times*—sez she."

When Lord Londonderry was Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, he and Lady Londonderry came to stay at Curraghmore, and to our great joy brought their little girl Birdie Stewart (now Lady Ilchester) with them. Lady Londonderry was a cousin of Father's, and we saw a lot of the family in London, but in Ireland, if you live in the north, it is such an awful journey to the south that it would be quicker to go over to London and back again from there. Dublin was the only meeting-place; all the railway lines ended in that city from every part, and as the trains on the various lines never fitted in, one always had to sleep in Dublin to get in any direction. I remember hearing Cousin Nelly Londonderry telling my father how she had put her foot into it. There was an old Lady Drogheda then who was

very ugly ; she was called " Monstrous Mary " behind her back. Apparently she always liked to be the leading guest at any dinner-party and go in to dinner with the Lord-Lieutenant, and a few days before the Londonderrys had come down to us, some beautiful Duchess had come to stay at the Castle, and Lady Drogheda was very put out at taking second place. Nelly, noticing how cross she looked, said to the man next to her with a meaning look, " Poor old Monstrous Mary's nose is out of joint to-night," and then remembered too late that her partner was Lady Drogheda's brother, Lord Wharncliffe. I gather the remark was not received with any enthusiasm.

My father had a horrible game called " spadgers," which consisted of his suddenly shooting out an arm as you passed, seizing you by the calf of the leg, and calling out, " Tweetie, tweetie," which was the spadger's war-cry, but we discovered a deadly revenge. His hair was very curly and thick, iron-grey in colour all round his head, but on the top there was a very fluffy white bit that went across and prevented him being bald. This we declared had only lately grown, and we christened it the " new crop," so we used to make a dive at the top of his head and brush this piece of hair straight on end as worn by a clown, then dart away and chant " New crop, new crop," just out of reach. It always subdued him, but the danger was that you might get a " spadger " while you were operating on the " new crop." It needed great activity and judgment to get clear away spadger-less. When we were very young he invented a cunning game called " shut eye " ; we all three lay down flat on the floor with our eyes tight shut, and the one who didn't open his eyes won, but as we were all busy opening one eye

to see if the others were doing the same, to catch them out, nobody ever did win, and it must have kept us quiet for hours.

I was the only member of the family who had a passion for reading books ; Mother was always hunting through " commentaries " looking for texts to prove that we were the lost tribes, but Papa liked a good novel, only someone had to vet. it first to find out if it really was the sort of book he would like. So I, having exhausted Walter Scott, Thackeray, and Dickens, and every book in the place, used to fall upon the twenty-four library books which arrived once a month in a huge box from London, and read them all, picking out any special one suitable for my father and giving it to him to read. Sometimes he used to look rather startled when I casually remarked, " You will like this book ; it's rather improper, but very interesting," and after reading it, man-like, would go and complain to Mother that she ought not to let me read such things, but Mother never minded. She had a theory that " to the pure all things are pure," and that if no one made a fuss about such things, a child would take them naturally, which was quite true, as, though I noticed occasionally that there were improper bits in the books, I never paid any attention or dwelt on them. I looked on sex as odd things that grown-up people did, but as it never occurred to me that I should be grown up, they did not affect me personally, and I took no interest in them.

Sometimes elderly ladies coming to stay would see me with a book in my hand, and being shocked take it away to Mother, saying I ought not to read it ; so Mother would put it in a drawer, and when her guests departed give it me back again to finish, as she said she

hated stopping in the middle of a story herself. Mother was the most marvellous and understanding person that ever lived. She always put herself right inside another person's mind, and saw things from the other's point of view ; that was why no one ever minded telling her the most frightful things they had done, and asking her advice and help. She never judged or lectured, she just concentrated on what was best to be done to save the situation.

There was a funny little old French governess who had been with Mother when she was young ; her name was Mademoiselle Richard, but she was always called " Dicky " when she came to stay at Curraghmore. She would get attacks of conscience that she was not being any use to us and ought to leave ; the only way to keep her quiet was to convince her that she was teaching us French, and as it was in our holidays that she came, it used to bore us to death when Mother said we must have French dictation so as to soothe Dicky. Luckily she had a theory that a child ought never to write down anything spelt wrongly, so if we didn't know how to spell a word we just asked her, which saved our poor brains from too much strain. Dicky was very greedy, and all her conversation inevitably ended by her saying, " Je me rappelle bien que c'étais un Vendredi parce que nous avions du canard avec des petits pois," or some good reason of the kind !

We were very bad sailors, and unfortunately both my father and mother were very good ones, so they never realized the full horrors of the many journeys to and from London and our dread of them. From the moment we began to pack the school-room box, which went on with the heavy luggage a couple of days in advance, we would feel all upset, and by the time we actually

started on the journey ourselves all hope was abandoned. I was even worse than Susan, and used to be ill without stopping all the way in the carriage to the station, in the train to Waterford, driving from train to boat at the quay, all the way across to Milford Haven, the whole train journey from Milford to Paddington, and even in the railway bus from the station to Charles Street. When I think of it now I wonder whether it was worse for me or for my companions ! We generally travelled the same night as the coachman and his family and all the servants ; and as there were only two large ladies' cabins on those terrible old Milford boats, we were all huddled together, eight in a cabin, everyone being frightfully ill, with a strong smell of brandy to add to everything else. When the day of departure dawned, there always seemed to be half a hurricane blowing. Sometimes we would hopefully send a wire to Papa, " Gale blowing—what shall we do if it gets worse ? " but the inevitable answer was always, " Come as arranged." No wonder our maid " Huddy " collected all our oldest clothes for us to put on for journeys ; we must have looked hardly human by the time we arrived, but then Huddy was always of a pessimistic turn of mind. She used to say that any clothes we took exception to were " *Assez bon pour Londres*," presumably because they got dirtier there than in the country, and if you offered her anything to eat she always made a sick face and said, " *Ç'a me tourne*," which was not encouraging. When I grew up she would say, " You think only of yourself," to which I replied acidly, " Yes, I do : if I thought of you—there would be two people thinking of you, and nobody thinking of me," a remark that was too true even for her to contradict. Whatever we did, she always said, " If you do that now, what will you do when

. you are thirty?" So when I did strike thirty I longed to send her a telegram to tell her what I *did* do. She came from Geneva, and always told us of the glories of Montreux-Vevey and "le tour du Lac," which gave us an unreasonable loathing for these beauty spots.

CHAPTER VII

WE took a furnished house at Ramsgate one year, which seemed lovely to me. It had a balcony towards the sea all closed in with glass, and the rooms on to it had bamboo and bead curtains, which I thought marvellous, and wished we could have them at Curraghmore. There was a big railway tunnel under the house, and when the trains went through it the whole house rocked about, which was very exciting. It was while we were at Ramsgate that I wrote one of my world-famous!! essays. I think this one was on the subject of "Bringing up Children," and as far as I can remember it began as follows: "Before the Conquest children were wild, savage, and cruel, but after the Conquest, that detestable system of spoiling crept in." What happened to children after that date is still wrapt in mystery. A former essay of mine also achieved some renown. It was on the subject of "Whales," and was very concise: "The whale is a fish that can't live on land, and dies in the water. Sometimes it gets stuck on a sand bank and there perishes misablee (perishes miserably). I think this is all I know about whales," which everybody must admit about sums up the whole subject.

The great joy of Ramsgate to us entirely consisted in our visits to Southwood House, St. Lawrence, where the Weigall family lived. Mr. Weigall was an artist, and his wife, Lady Rose, was a sister of Lord Westmorland, who had married our aunt, Lady Adelaide Curzon.

There were lots and lots of Weigall sons ranging from Fitz, who was a good deal older, down to Bucky; and the only girl, Rachel, was about my age. The whole family were mad about cricket, and at mealtimes a continuous verbal battle raged without ceasing. Lady Rose was the kindest person in the world, but very vague, and above the babel of sound Mr. Weigall used to shout down to her at the other end of the table, "Rose, Rose, give those poor children something to eat," regardless of our bleats that we had plenty. The first time I met Rachel when we were very small I ran at her and knocked her down, which seems to have given me more pleasure than it did to her, as I came home in great good-temper and remarked, "I like that little girl, I can knock her down," but Rachel told her family that she disliked me for the same reason; however, that was many years before our reunion, and we were great friends at this time. Rachel always seemed to be carrying a half-grown kitten in a tight embrace; in fact, every cat and kitten at Southwood had an obvious waist caused by Rachel's deep affection in their early youth. We used to have the most marvellous games all over the gardens and the fields, sometimes with the boys and sometimes with the gardener's son, Harry Wilkins. He was a very useful ally, as he could tell from bitter experience where his father was likely to be and if we could raid the fruit in the garden with impunity. Mr. Wilkins was a very fierce old man, and had no opinion as to the uses of children in a garden. The back gate of the garden opened on to a slum, and all the children there were sworn foes of ours. We used to collect stinging nettles, and armed with these weapons make a sortie through the gate and fall upon our enemies when they least expected it; before they

had time to collect their ammunition of tin cans and stones, we made a speedy retreat, Harry Wilkins standing on guard to bang the gate to as we rushed in, pursued by the wild hordes from without, who, with yells of impotent rage, flung themselves up against it. A few seconds later a barrage of missiles would come hurtling over the wall, needing very expert dodging.

Southwood wasn't nearly so delightful when Aunt Adza Westmorland came to stay there : luncheon was punctual, and everybody sat up straight ; even Bill did not slowly subside under the table, as his wont was at other times, leaving nothing but his head visible, and only managing this by catching his chin on the edge of the dining-table. Everybody behaved nicely in the most banal way, though of course the chronic cricket battles still raged on in low mutters. The whole family were frightfully good to Susan and me, and we adored being there always. Lady Rose had built a row of huts at the side of a field, and all through the summer they had relays of little boys from schools in the poorest districts in London ; each lot stayed a fortnight, and had a marvellous time. I remember one small boy sucking a peppermint, and one of the Weigall boys saying to him, " Hello, where did you get that lovely sweet ? " but the boy said scornfully, " 'Tain't mine. I only paid for a suck, not a swallow."

Years afterwards, when we were yachting round the coast, we came into Ramsgate harbour, and I used to go up to Southwood every day and get the Weigall boys to teach me how to bicycle. It was just when the bicycling craze had started, and everybody was mad about it ; the most unlikely Dowagers and Duchesses would solemnly pedal round and round Battersea Park and feel frightfully fast and sporting. I was very keen to

learn, but I didn't dare tell my father what I was doing, as he would have been horrified ; even the sight of a man on a bicycle at that time would make people run out and look. Bicyclists caused a lot of accidents, as old horses would shy all over the place, and go nearly mad with terror, and I have seen a Bath-chair man spring to one side and nearly upset the old lady he was pulling when someone on a bicycle came up and passed him suddenly. Most people thought it too dreadful, and wondered what young people would do next. In Paris the girls wore bloomers, but then you know the sort of place Paris is !! I heard a parson say in his sermon, " Once I was in Paris ; " then he paused, and, with a face convulsed with horror, he continued, " Oh ! it's a very wicked place ! " Anyhow, the ladies who bicycled in England were more conventional, and confined themselves to wearing cunning skirts that went all round in front and divided into a sort of double-box pleat at the back, very neat and respectable ; but they wore bloomers underneath to show that they were not old-fashioned and behind the times, also it was considered " nicer " to do so in case the lady cyclist fell off.

I think it was while we had the house at Ramsgate that Mother showed the first signs of developing a new vice, that was even worse than the lead-pencil complex, none other than the collection of baskets, and in these she would keep her letters. Most of the baskets had names which denoted their origin. She would say to one of us, " Skip and fetch me ' Ripoldsau, ' " and off we would go, very slowly, declaring we would not " skip. " " Ripoldsau " had a beautiful spray of pink wool cherries embroidered on the one side with its name in green wool on the other. Mother steadfastly declared that she had got " Ripoldsau " by honest

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barter, and as we were not with her on that trip, we had to give her the benefit of the doubt ; but certainly " Rickets " was not acquired honestly : history does not relate what originally arrived in that basket, or who Mr. Rickets was, but we felt sure he intended to get his property back, as he had written his name in large letters all over it.

The following autumn my father and mother went to Egypt for the whole winter and took Captain and Mrs. Gaskell and Canon MacColl, who were all great friends of theirs. We went to my grandfather's and grandmother's at Badminton. In those days the station was at Chippenham, eleven miles away, which made it rather a journey. Grandpapa was a great racing man, and used to get such a lot of telegrams that they put up an instrument in the house, and the man who did the lamps was taught to receive and send messages. We adored Grandpapa, and no one could imagine the excitement of his return to Badminton when we were tiny : the carriage always came to the step door on the stable-yard side of the house, and there was a long passage from there to the waiting-hall in the centre. Granny used to be as excited as we were, and from the time he was expected to arrive we all stood looking down the passage in an agony of expectation, someone clinging tightly on to each of us like hounds in leash ; then the swing-door at the far end would open, and at the first sight of Grandpapa they would leave go, and we would rush the whole way down as hard as we could, crashing up against him and smothering him with hugs.

He used to spoil us frightfully, and kept a permanent bottle of barley sugar in his sitting-room for our benefit. Uncle Worcester was a great friend of ours too, but he once came out of his room and blew a foghorn as I was

coming up the great, big, dark, oak staircase, and after that, though I knew it was only he who had blown it and loved him just as much anywhere else in the house, I was terrified to pass that place, and used to rush by it, with my heart beating, for fear that the horn might blow again. Another thing that always filled me with fear in the evening was a huge stag's head that was over the door in the night-nursery. I used to be positive that its body was outside, and that it was struggling to get into the room. I would lay awake for ages with my eyes fixed on it, and be sure I could see it moving farther and farther in. The funny part about these childish terrors is that one never tells anybody about them at the time ; I don't think I have ever mentioned my horror of that deer's head to any living soul to this day, nor did I ever think of it in the daytime, or look outside the door to see if its body was really there.

The church at Badminton is built on to the house, and there is a large gallery at the back to which we all went up a little staircase ; it had a fireplace with a huge fire in it in the winter, and most comfortable arm-chairs to sit in, enormous prayer-books on the front where we stood or knelt, so that that was the only time the clergyman could see if anyone was in the gallery at all, which was very convenient, as all the men used to creep out before the sermon unobserved. In those days it was always considered that " women should be religious," it being apparently unnecessary to the male of the species. I see that in Mr. E. F. Benson's book, when writing about Lady Henry Somerset, he mentions that Grand-papa Beaufort, though he had a lot of intrigues with various ladies of more or less notorious renown, was so religious that when one of these transferred her attentions to someone else and told him so, he not

only "with tears bewailed to his sons and daughter-in-law his cruel fate, but sought spiritual consolation in his trial, so the order went forth that next Sunday every groom, coachman, and helper in the Badminton stables should attend church and receive sacrament with their master," but to anyone who knew Grandpapa this little anecdote seems rather comic, and I think Lady Henry must have been thinking of someone else when she told it to Mr. Benson. First of all, Grandpapa was a man who certainly did have a good many little affairs which were not looked upon as being anything unusual in those days, but he did not upset himself over them in any way and never referred to them before his family. He was not at all a religious man in the Church sense, though he was the kindest-hearted and most truly Christian human being that ever existed, and as he invariably slipped out of the church gallery before the sermon, he would not have known or cared whether any of his employees stayed to Holy Communion or not. It was the fashion everywhere at that time, and for long afterwards, that all the servants indoor and outdoor should go to church on Sunday: the maids in black or grey, with neat black bonnets on their heads, the men in dark Sunday suits. They all went as a matter of course without any special orders, but the second service was quite optional. To this day the body of the church at Badminton is filled with the servants and employees on the place, who really form most of the inhabitants of Badminton village, which is a few hundred yards from the house and just outside the stable gate.

Another little story Mr. Benson tells, of a picture arriving at Badminton of one of "the Duke's Mistresses" and Granny ordering it to be hung on the wall of his sitting-room, is not a very likely one either,

as the said sitting-room was a huge room, the walls panelled with Grinling Gibbons carving and a few priceless old Masters let in. Mr. Benson says that Lady Henry Somerset was ostracized by Society for accusing her husband of unnatural behaviour, as in those days women were supposed not to know or anyhow notice such things in their male relations, but I think the real reason was that Society people avoided anyone who could so lightly accuse a perfectly decent husband of a criminal offence and bring such a lot of unnecessary sorrow and agony to her father and mother-in-law, who had been very kind to her, entirely out of her own lively and rather unhealthy imagination. Mr. Benson does not mention that Uncle Henry returned at once to London when he heard of his wife's accusations, and insisted on standing his trial, from which he was discharged without a stain on his character ; the proof of which being that to this day he is a Privy Councillor. He was so disgusted with the whole thing and hurt by a few of his friends who tried to sit on the fence and avoid him until he was proved innocent that he shook the dust of England off his feet and went to Florence, where he still lives, only returning to London at rare intervals when he has to do so officially. I think his living abroad may have led people who knew about the scandal vaguely to believe that there was something in it after all, and that he dare not come to England, which is rather a pity. I believe that Lady Henry's mother, Lady Somers, accused her husband of the same thing quite unjustly. So perhaps it was she who put it into her daughter's head.

I think Uncle Henry married just before Mother did, but his wife was not at all a favourite at Badminton ; however, they went out of their way to be exceedingly

nice to her always. Uncle Henry was a bit of a genius in his way ; I have never heard anyone play the piano like he did, he could positively ring tears out of it. The fashion in music then was more sentimental than it is now ; people may be scornful of the songs he wrote, but I believe if " Dawn " were to come out as a brand-new song people would go mad about it.

Uncle Henry was very good company, but like all people who are exceptionally gifted in one direction, I expect he would not have been easy for any woman to live with : even his own relations realized this, and it made them try to be more friendly to his wife on that account.

Mother told me that she was staying at Badminton just before the row, when they knew nothing about it, and of how surprised they were to get a letter from Lady Henry asking if she could come and stay for a week for no apparent reason. She came and made herself particularly charming to them all for a few days, but to their astonishment, on the fourth morning of her visit she did not appear at breakfast. Granny told the butler to go and see if anything was the matter, but he said, " Lady Henry left early this morning, your Grace." They were all amazed when he told them further that her maid had written for a fly from Chippenham to come and fetch her at 7 a.m., and she had gone with all her luggage before anyone realized it. It came out afterwards that she had actually arranged everything with her solicitor before she wrote and suggested coming down there ; and this must have been a well-thought-out move, as she said at the trial that she was kept a prisoner at Badminton to prevent her bringing the case on, but that even her sister-in-law (my mother) was so sorry for her that she helped her to escape !—no

wonder Society was a little bit afraid of her imagination running riot about them too. I never saw her myself, as all this happened before I was born, when my cousin Sommy Somerset was about two years old, but we knew him very well, as he spent most of his holidays at Badminton. He is a very lucky person really, as he inherited great charm of manners from his mother and a very shrewd and subtle wit from his father without any of their various weak points.

When I was small I was always supposed to be exactly like Granny Beaufort, and they used to call me "little Grandmama," but were very taken aback at my taking advantage of the idea when my nurse came to fetch me at bedtime and haughtily answering her call with, "Duchesses don't go to bed at six o'clock"; however, this was not quite such a sign of pride as it sounds, as I was under the impression that the word Duchess meant Grandmother, and that everybody's maternal grandmother was called "Duchess," their father's mother being called "Dowager."

Granny was Lady Georgina Curzon, daughter of Lord Howe, and descended from "Black Dick," the famous Earl Howe who commanded the fleet at the battle of June 1st. Granny's mother was a Brudenell-Bruce, and a sister, I think, to that Lord Cardigan who was a General in the Crimean War. There is a story about the latter going to church one Christmas Day with his wife, and seeing a large text made out of cotton-wool hung above their pew, "Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given," upon which they both walked out in a huff, as they had no children and were very touchy about it.

Granny said that her mother was for ever having children, and that she never remembered her doing

anything but lie on a sofa, so she thinks she must have been very delicate ; certainly she died when Granny was twelve years old, as after that she became her father's constant companion. He was Chamberlain to Queen Adelaide, and his second girl, Adza (afterwards Lady Westmorland), was her godchild. They all had to live at Court and move about to wherever King William and Queen Adelaide happened to be staying. Once little Adza escaped from her nurse and ran down a passage and into the room where King William lay dying ; someone on duty at the door caught her, and she gave a little squeak. The King started and said in a weak voice, " A mouse," as he had a horror of mice, but they quickly told him—no—it was only little Lady Adelaide, and he smiled and said, " Bless her little heart." He was very fond of children, and they all adored him. Lord Howe stayed on as Chamberlain to Queen Adelaide after the King died. He was furious with Granny for getting engaged to Lord Worcester as he was then. She was staying at Badminton when they fell in love ; a thunderstorm came on, and she was so frightened she went and hid between one of the great double doors, but he found her there and proposed. Lord Howe wouldn't do anything about the wedding, he was so angry with her for leaving him, but they were married at some little Royal Chapel, at Bushey, I think. Grandpapa, who was in the Blues then, was very much annoyed at Lord Howe's behaviour, so he bought a huge wedding cake himself, cut it up with his sword, and gave it round to all the soldiers of his troop.

Granny told me that she never felt so ashamed in her life as when she went to stay at her old home, " Penn," for the first time after her marriage ; her two sisters, who were much younger than she was, and were about ten

and eight years old at this time, were wildly excited at the thought of her return, but as she was arriving so late they had to go to bed and put off seeing her till the morning ; so at the earliest possible moment they rushed to her room, but when they saw that Grandpapa was in bed too they looked absolutely scandalized—stopped dead—and in one voice said, “ Oh, Nina ! ” and filed slowly out of the room. Their father being a widower, they were not accustomed to such behaviour.

For some reason Grandpapa transferred from the Blues to the 7th Hussars, and they were quartered at Ballincollig near Cork at one time. Granny’s eldest child was born dead, and lies in a little grave outside Badminton Church by the side of my sister Mary. Uncle Worcester was the next to come—his name was Lord Glamorgan—and when he was small he used to call himself “ Arginmargin ” with a very Gloucestershire accent, caught from his nurserymaid. Granny was crossing from Ireland before Uncle Henry was born and got taken ill in the train between Dublin and Kingstown, so they moved her into the waiting-room of some little station, got a dreadful old tipsy Gamp from Dublin and the baby was born there. When they were at Ballincollig they had four rooms, two for the children and their nurses, using the others as a bedroom and sitting-room for themselves. They fixed up a screen in a corner of the sitting-room for Grandpapa to use as a dressing-room, and Granny told me that when they gave little dinner-parties she used to have to talk a lot to distract the guests from noticing the awful struggles going on behind the screen, where Grandpapa, who was always late, was trying to get into his starched evening shirt.

They were quartered in Dublin too at one time, and

had two tiny houses with another one in between, so had to run backwards and forwards out into the street when they wanted to get dressed or fetch anything. I think these Irish years were the happiest time of their lives. After his father died they came back to live at Badminton, and of course he was more away with his racing and a hundred other interests. Granny hated London and would never go out much in Society, and he was so social and loved rushing round, but all the same, in spite of his little love affairs and dissipations, they adored each other to the day of their death, and never once let a day or even a post go by without writing if they were away from each other. I fancy Grandpapa had very bad luck with his racing and lost a lot of money. He had a horse called "Rêve d'Or" which was rather celebrated at that time, but some of the others were not so successful. Fred Archer the jockey used to ride his horses, and I think was doing so when he was killed. Grandpapa declared that Archer fell and cut the top of his head open, that his brains were lying out on the ground, and that he got up, put the brains into his cap, and then fell down dead, but I expect a doctor would say that was quite impossible.

CHAPTER VIII

GRANDPAPA's father, the 7th Duke of Beaufort, married twice—first of all Georgina Fitzroy, by whom he had two daughters, and secondly, her half-sister Emily Culling Smith. Their mother was Lady Anne Wellesley, daughter of Gravet 1st Earl of Mornington, and she had four brothers: the two eldest became successively 2nd and 3rd Earls of Mornington; the third brother was the great Duke of Wellington, and the fourth became Lord Cowley. The law about marrying a deceased wife's sister was in abeyance at that time, but evidently such marriages were not approved of, as the Duke had to run away with Emily Culling Smith; however, they took her governess with them as chaperon, so it was all very proper. As my grandfather was the only son of the second marriage, it brought up the question of this old law at the time of his father's death, and so as to make sure that there could be no question at any later date of his legitimacy, they brought in a Bill which decided that "after that date" it should be illegal to marry your first wife's sister. Grandpapa always felt that this was frightfully wrong, and worked hard all his life to have it altered and the ban done away with, as if he had not been in rather a prominent position the necessity would not have arisen, and the law probably would have been left in abeyance.

Anyhow, his mother Emily had a vile temper, and was not a very pleasant woman. She had an enormous Wellington nose, which descended more or less to all her children. Auntie Geraldine, who never married,

had the worst one, but she was a dear. She was Lady-in-Waiting to the Duchess of Cambridge—Princess Mary of Teck's mother—and she lived in a tiny house in Upper Brook Street, and had more ornaments and photographs than you could believe possible in her small drawing-room. One could not move without upsetting some rickety little table covered with knick-knacks. I think Great-Grandmother Beaufort's temper got so bad in the end that it sent her mad, as I remember she had a house in Hill Street when I was very young, but we were never allowed to see her. There was a story about her going for drives in her victoria, and if the coachman went in any direction that she did not approve of she would suddenly spring up and beat him on the back with her umbrella. We were always rather nervous of passing her house for fear she should pounce out and attack us with her famous umbrella.

Grandpapa said she was very cruel to all her children, particularly to him. When they sent him to school it was such an awful place and he was so miserable that he ran away home, but she had him beaten well and then sent straight back with a letter, asking the schoolmaster to thrash him, which he did with great gusto. Her second daughter, Lady Rose Somerset, who was the most charming and delightful girl, fell in love with a very smart and good-looking officer in the Life Guards called Captain Lovell, but the worldly old mother wanted all her daughters to marry Peers, so would not hear of this engagement. However, Lady Rose got her way in the end, and they married and were immensely happy always. Captain Lovell was a magnificent rider, and used to hunt a pack of staghounds in the New Forest, where he had a lovely place. In Mrs. Philip Martineau's book *Hunting and Horses*, she

mentions hunting with this pack, but puts in that when the stag was killed it was a lady who gave the *coup de grâce* to the stag, and adds that this was Captain Lovell's daughter, who was doing first whip to her father. I asked my cousin Alma Frances if this was correct, and she tells me that though she always acted as first whip to her father, Mrs. Martineau must have been mistaken over her killing the stag, as she never did such a thing in her life.

Lady Blanche Somerset married Lord Kinnoul, and later another daughter, Lady Emily Somerset, married Lord Ormathwaite, and Lady Edith, Lord Londesborough, so the old Duchess collected enough Lords to suit her in the end.

My father was some relation to the Wellington family too, and he made out that through him we were fourth cousins to my mother, so we used to call her "Cousin Blanchie" when we wanted to tease her, and never failed to get a rise. Grandpapa was Master of the Horse to Queen Victoria for a few years from 1858, so Granny had to come to London and do official things then, but she far preferred living quietly at Badminton and going to see all the poor people in the village, looking after anyone who was ill. She had baskets with china jars in them, and used to put rice puddings, remains of chicken mince, or any little tasty bit left over from luncheon in these, and take them to any old people about the place. She was such a saint and we loved her, but all the same she kept us in order.

Mother was their youngest child and the only daughter. She had five brothers besides the eldest one, who was born dead, but the four big ones were so much older than she was that she didn't see much of them; the fifth, who was called Fitzzy, was born in 1855, and

was about a year older than she was. He was delicate and became a hunchback, but for a long time he never discovered about his deformity, as they moved all the looking-glasses too high up for him to see into. I think this was really a mistake, as Mother said when he did suddenly see himself somewhere it gave him an awful shock: he said, "Good God, I'm a hunchback," and fainted; however, Granny said this did not prevent him being inordinately vain: he was always buying new clothes and new ties, and was very fussy over his appearance, but I believe this is quite a common trait among deformities of this sort. Mother and he were fast friends, and they used to kneel down and say their prayers side by side when they were small. Mother said she always tried to hurry up with her prayers and get them done first so as to jump up and tickle the soles of his feet, and he used to get furious and say, "Damn you, Blanchie, now I've lost my place," and have to begin his prayers all over again.

When he was twenty-one he was driving in a hansom-cab in London with Granny, and he suddenly broke a blood-vessel. To her horror the blood poured away right down into the road. Luckily they were near our house in Charles Street, so they hurried there, and he was carried in and laid on my father's bed in his room on the ground-floor. Everybody was in a great fuss rushing for doctors and trying to stop him bleeding to death, and my father wandering up and downstairs quite good and peaceful, asking where he was going to sleep, and nobody paying any attention to him. The doctor did stop the bleeding, but told him that if it ever happened again he would die, and that the only thing for him was to lie up and be a permanent invalid. He asked how long he would last if he just

lived a normal life, and he said about three or four years—so Fitzzy decided that he would rather live while he was alive and not just exist, and he went on playing cricket and doing everything as usual. He did actually live five years, dying quite suddenly in 1881, while he was playing in a cricket match in front of the house.

There was always plenty of cricket at Badminton. All the uncles played, and the Grace family lived quite near. They were nearly all doctors. W. G. Grace used to come over and play a lot, and his brother Alfred Grace was our family doctor. I remember so well Susan and I developing awful coughs and Dr. Alfred not being quite sure what was the matter. Susan whispered to me, "whatever you do, don't whoop," when we were coming down to see him ; I tried my utmost to stifle it, and got black in the face, and then to my dismay gave a perfect whoop and we were sunk. Uncle Edward's boy Roy, who was much younger than we were, caught it, and we were in disgrace all round ; someone said tar was good, and so Roy, Susan, and I used to be put in a small room with a bath of tar and a red-hot poker stuck in it, causing the most suffocating fumes which sent us off into paroxysms of coughing, a diabolical trick. Of course we used to be frightfully sick whenever we ate anything, so Granny arranged a beautiful Crown Derby bowl on a table behind a pillar under the stairs, and Susan and I used to race for this when in dire need. Nobody bothered about china in Granny's generation ; it was just there for use like any kitchen bowl. I believe that Queen Victoria once expressed a wish to go and see Raglan Castle or Tintern Abbey, both of which belonged to the Beaufort family, so a picnic was ar-

ranged, and Granny and Grandpapa went down there on purpose to entertain her ; everything was taken down from Badminton, and the china used was a priceless old Worcester service. On the way home most of it was broken and thrown away, but nobody minded ; it was just china, and there was plenty more—I have seen a few bits that remain, and they are lovely.

Mother told me that at first Grandpapa made a great fuss of the boys, but didn't pay any attention to her until one day he came up to the nursery to say good-bye, as he was leaving next morning early to go racing at Newmarket. She was rather piqued at being neglected, and called out after him, " Take your girly with you," which took his fancy so much that he always took her afterwards when he went to his rooms at Newmarket, and they became absolutely inseparable. Grandpapa was the most unpunctual person that ever lived, and always turned night into day. He would sit up till four or five in the morning writing his letters, and then not appear till luncheon, unless he got up early to go hunting. Everybody used to say how extraordinary it was ; they could quite understand sitting up late for a party, but not by oneself, and I used to think so too, but now I find myself doing just the same. I think it is the marvellous peace of being alone that is so delightful, and if one thinks of it, one never is alone for very long in the day or evening. There are always meals or someone in the room, and people come and chat with one ; all very nice, but exhausting.

As Grandpapa didn't come down to breakfast that meal was on time, Granny being punctual ; also luncheon, as we never waited for him, and I don't think he ever had tea—except the sort with boiled eggs after coming in from hunting. But the exact time for

dinner was impossible for anyone to predict. People used to "rest" from about six-thirty in their bedrooms, even if they had not done anything all day, except go for a walk—why, I can't think; but anyhow, it was the fashion then, and at about seven-thirty if you walked upstairs and along the passages you would see all the doors a little bit open—waiting to hear the dressing-gong, which never rang until Grandpapa went up to dress. When it went you knew that dinner would be in half an hour from then. I can't think how the cook managed to produce such good food, but perhaps she had long ago worked it all out into a system. I have known it to be as late as nine-thirty sometimes before the dressing-gong rang; it just depended on Grandpapa noticing the time at all—apparently no one thought of going in to remind him; Granny might have done it, but she was always upstairs "resting" at that time, and if Mother was there she would be almost as vague about the time as her father.

Grandpapa always had his coach up at Lord's for Eton and Harrow; it stood in the front near the other side of the pavilion. The Londesboroughs' coach was the first and ours the second, so we had great fun between the two with all the cousins on both. I think there were only carriages in front then, not rover seats. My brother was at Eton, but would not take the least interest in cricket, so Susan and I felt we ought to keep up the family honour, and clapped, shouted, and roared in the appropriate places, at the end of the match dashing into the battle that always raged with much vim and ferocity.

We must have stayed nearly the whole winter at Badminton while my father and mother were in Egypt, because I remember we were still there for the servants'

ball, which was given every year on Grandpapa's birthday, about the first of February, and we were allowed to come down to it.

The dance was in the huge ball-room at the far end of the house, and you had to go through about three large passage rooms and long corridors to get there. It was in this room that Granny was once attacked by a lunatic. He was the head cook there at the time and suddenly went raving mad; he appeared with a revolver in one hand and a huge kitchen knife in the other, and told Granny he was going to kill her. But she was very brave and also had an extraordinary dominating look in her eyes which she could summon to her aid in any emergency. We used to call it the "cold zar." She sometimes used it on us when we were naughty with great effect. Anyhow, it defeated the cook, because when she looked at him and said "Leave the room," he went quite quietly, and they were able to disarm him and take him away to the asylum without much trouble, but it must have been rather a moment, as the room was so far away from anywhere there was no chance of being able to attract attention.

I think Aunt Louisa Waterford must have died some time during the winter 1891-2, as in the following autumn we went to Ford Castle for the first time. It really was the most perfect place, just the right size and parts of it very old and historical. The oldest part consisted of a round tower with enormous thick walls, so that each window was almost a separate little room of its own; we had the one on the ground-floor as our schoolroom, but it was rather dark and depressing. The room at the top of the tower was very ghostly, the furniture, bed, and tapestry on the walls being

exactly as on the night before the Battle of Flodden Field in 1513, and you can see where the battle took place across the little valley from the windows.

The story goes that at that time our Delaval ancestress, who seems to have been rather a gay lady, was an old flame of King James IV of Scotland, but as she wanted the English Army under the Earl of Surrey to win the battle, she arranged with him to decoy the Scotch King to Ford and keep him there all night, which she succeeded in doing, the room I have described being the one he slept in. A great friend of his was the only person who knew about this visit to Ford, and they arranged that in case of emergency he was to come with the King's horse to a little door in a sunk fence below the terrace and give a signal, the King coming down the secret staircase which leads from this room to it. However, as Lord Surrey knew from the lady that the King was there, he attacked the Scotch Army at earliest dawn, and when the outposts came rushing into the camp to tell the King that the enemy was coming, they found the Royal tent empty; then went up a cry of treachery, and they completely lost their heads and fled, being pursued and cut down by the English. The moment the King's friend heard the news that the English soldiers were approaching, he got on his horse, and taking another with him, galloped down to warn the King, who rushed down the secret stairs and fled with his faithful follower: the history book says that King James was intercepted and slain by Lord Surrey, so I suppose they lay in wait for him somewhere between Ford and Coldstream, where the nearest border-line into Scotland would be.

Sir Walter Scott stayed at Ford while he was writing *Marmion*, in which the story of the battle comes in,

and the long panelled hall where he used to do his writing is always called the Marmion Gallery in consequence.

There is a very attractive archway and portcullis as you drive up towards the front of the house, also a "Keep" tower with a flag on it. We used to fly the White Ensign, as my father was a member of the Royal Yacht Squadron, to Uncle Charlie Beresford's indignation; like all naval officers, he thought that no one outside the Navy had a right to it. There was a model village just close to the house, and all the people were very prosperous and independent. The school-house walls were entirely lined by Aunt Louisa's frescoes, and people used to come a long way to see them. The church was in the grounds, and I remember Aunt Penelope coming to stay and insisting that the Rector should have a service there on what she called "Peter and Paul's Day." He resisted stoutly, knowing that no one would come on a weekday, but in the end said he would come down to the church and have the service if anybody did. Of course no one came, but Auntie Penelope got her way by taking her unfortunate maid with her, so they and the sexton, who had to be there to ring the bell, made the "two or three that were gathered together," and the Rector had to do the whole service for them, to his great fury.

We used to go over to Fenton a good deal, where the Freddy Lambtons lived. He was twin brother to Lord Durham, and eventually succeeded him for a few months, but was so ill at the time that he hardly realized it, which was lucky, as they were so devoted to each other, it would almost have been like a part of him dying. The Lambton girls were a little younger than we were, but we used to have great fun with them in a

dear little house in a wood near Fenton, where we were allowed to cook and have our meals.

Violet afterwards married Lord Ellesmere and Lilian Lord Home. Chillingham, where the wild herds of cattle are, was one of the show places near Ford. It belonged to an old Lord and Lady Tankerville, who were very religious ; also Alnwick, where the old Duke of Northumberland lived in great pomp and state ; but we far preferred Fenton and Newton Don, where the Charlie Balfours lived, near Kelso. Lady Nina Balfour was a tremendous friend of my father and mother, and she and Charlie used to come over to Ford a lot whenever we were living there, and were the most amusing and delightful people.

My father and mother had enjoyed Egypt so much the winter before that they decided to go again in 1892-3, but this time to take Susan and me with them without a governess.

When we were in London before starting on our journey a man called Harry Sargent, who was a great character over in Ireland and had the most colossal brogue I have ever heard in my life, rushed in to see my father and give him advice. He always began his sentences by saying, "O-u-u-u-u, Lord Waterford," and this time he seemed in a great state of mind, shouting "O-u-u-u-u, Lord Waterford—don't ye go bathe in the Nile or some o' them aligators 'll get yer " ; it was so likely that my father, who had been an invalid for at least seven years and was only able to walk a few steps at a time, should " go bathe " in the Nile or anywhere else, but Harry Sargent seemed very upset about it. My father could copy his brogue exactly, and one day he came to see us and was quite huffy, saying, " Them fellars say that you imitates me brogue," upon which

my father answered, copying him to the life : “ My dear Harry, how could I imitate your brogue when there’s no brogue to imitate ? ” at which Harry cheered up, saying, “ Ah ! now—I knew you wouldn’t do the like of that ; I’ll tell them fellars what you say,” and became quite content.

Harry Sargent used to attack the Beresford uncles too sometimes. One day Uncle Marcus was just going out when he saw Harry come up the steps and ring the bell, so he stepped behind the door and whispered to his manservant to say he was out. When the door was opened he could hear Harry spluttering away with his “ O-u-u-u-u, is Lord Marcus at home ? ” but when the man said very firmly, “ His lordship is not at home, sir,” all Harry said was, “ All right, then I’ll just come in and wait,” upon which Uncle Markey lost his head, and rushing out from behind the door shouted in a suitable brogue, “ Go away, Harry ; I don’t want yer,” but Harry, not one whit abashed, replied cheerfully, “ There now, I thought I’d find yer,” and made no attempt to leave for hours. Another time he saw Marcus walking down Piccadilly, and rushing after him tapped him on the back with his stick, calling out “ O-u-u-u-u, Lord Marcus, is it yer’self or yer brother,” upon which Marky, hoping to escape, said, “ I don’t know, but I think ’tis me brother.” You never had a dull minute when Harry Sargent was about.

CHAPTER IX

SUSAN went out by long sea with my father when we started for Egypt, and I went across via Paris and Florence with Mother : we had a " dahabeah " (a sort of house-boat) on the Nile, and a little steam tug to tow it when the wind was not strong enough, which was a great luxury. The Charlie Balfours had a dahabeah on the Nile too that year, but had not arranged for a tug and so got frightfully stuck and never got up beyond Luxor at all. They had a very fierce and warlike captain or " Rice," who always said it was impossible to move from wherever they were. The dragoman, Hassain, who was supposed to manage all the crew, was terrified of him. Sometimes Lady Nina Balfour would try to put her foot down, ordering Hassain to tell the captain that they were to move on the next morning whatever happened, and they used to hear him giving this message in trembling tones—in Arabic ; upon which the latter would dance with rage all over the deck and pour out a flood of obviously furious remarks on the subject, but Hassain always returned to them meekly saying, " Rice, he say, he very glad ! " and sure enough, when the next day came no move was made at all, but they were helpless, as they didn't know any Arabic. When we were on our way down we had arranged that we would stop whenever we passed them and give them a tow, going slowly downstream together, but just for a joke my father pretended to pass by when we saw them, and put us up to waving politely as we sailed by, calling out

casually, "Hullo—see you in Cairo." Nina was taken in for a minute, and throwing her arms wide open, just screamed in despair, so we stopped quickly, but she always declared it was only her heartbroken cries which softened our hearts. Hassain was much impressed with my father, and whenever he went on board to visit the Balfours he used to rush before him, pushing everyone out of the way, and calling out, "The Lord—he come," which sounded rather like the end of the world.

We had a splendid dragoman on our dahabeah called Salem, and his brother Hannah was a sort of head waiter. They were Syrians and Christians, and I think the Egyptians had more respect for them than for their fellow-countrymen. Hannah used to write lovely letters. He showed us one to his father all very poetical, "I look at the moon and the stars, and I think of you" sort of style, but not exactly "newsy." Hannah was very tidy and got into awful trouble with Dr. Bridgeman, who was out there with us, for tipping all his photographs into the Nile, he having arranged them carefully on the ledge, round which the sailors crept, under the window of our cabins, on purpose to get some more prints from the films in the sun. Dr. Bridgeman was always called "the Hakim," that being Arabic for doctor. He was a great authority on flowers, but we used to declare that if he didn't know the name of any particular one he invented one, and added "Nileotica" after it to make it sound very learned. He was a great talker, and my father used to call him "the Scarab," which was a beetle that used to come buzzing round in the evening, and say, "Now, Scarab, go and buzz upstairs," when he was busy.

We sent our letters off by the post-boat, which passed

down the river about once a week, but we never quite knew when it was coming, so at the first sight of it in the far distance everyone would rush down into the saloon and write like fury, trying to finish all the letters they had begun. The Hakim used to come in cheerfully saying, "Bring me pens, ink, and paper," and someone would chuck them towards him, but he went off, having no intention of writing at all, merely remarking that he was quoting Ollendorf, and it was only the fact that we were all writing against time at the moment that saved his life. We used to chaff him frightfully. Once he told us a long and rather confused story about someone, and at the end said, "You see, this man was a first cousin of the boy who had fits," so after that the poor Hakim had no peace. No sooner did he start to make any remarks about anyone than we ruined the whole thing by saying, "First of all, Hakim, tell us this—what relation was he to the boy who had fits?" but he was so good-natured he never minded what we said or did to him. The only time I ever saw him a little upset was when there was something wrong with the tug, and he discovered that we had arranged to stay on, near a small village, the following day, while it was being mended. It transpired that he had given one of the native Sheiks of the village a huge pill, which he called "a livingston rouser," and he feared that by the morrow the whole of the inhabitants of the place might rise up and slaughter us. As we felt that we might be included in the scene of carnage we tied up the steamer's weak spot with string and went on our way in a great hurry, trusting to luck that the boiler would not burst *en route*. The Hakim took the most appalling photos of us all, and to this day he threatens me with these monstrous things. It seems scarcely credible that anyone could



5TH MARQUESS OF WATERFORD

really look like that, and yet there it is in black and white.

My father took great pride in the fact that he managed his estates in a most businesslike manner, and used to have out enormous budgets of accounts and reports that must have cost a lot in postage. One day, when he was reading this very earnestly, I came up behind him and looked over his shoulder, and there on an empty page headed "Home-farm," I saw but one entry, which said, "One duck died"; after this we ragged him unmercifully over his budget. Whenever it arrived we always asked anxiously after the health of the other duck which remained! Papa used to go out in one of the small boats in the evening and shoot pigeons, and one day we had a terrible scene over this, as someone had mentioned casually that there were a lot of pigeons at a place called Kitcata, and this had apparently got stuck into my father's head, but as he never mentioned about it to anyone nobody noticed that we passed this place one morning and did not stop. That evening Papa discovered by chance that we had gone by this chosen spot, and he was completely distraught, saying that it was the only place on the Nile that he had really looked forward to, that he had only come out to Egypt on purpose to shoot pigeons at Kitcata; in fact, his whole life was ruined and nothing mattered any more. We all strove to comfort him; Mother said why not go back to Kitcata the next day, as we had the whole winter in front of us, and it did not matter if we stayed there a week—but no, he said it was no good, everything was spoiled, and even if he went to Kitcata now he wouldn't shoot pigeons.

He felt so bitterly about it that even when we were going downstream again and did stop at Kitcata he said

he didn't feel like shooting that evening, and didn't like the look of the pigeons !! Salem used to teach us Arabic, and Susan and I got very fluent in an ungrammatical way, and could even write a little, which is very difficult. We used to try to teach Mother at first, but she got rather mixed up with the various words, and after hearing her smilingly address an astonished-looking native boy as "Ebony Kelp," which is a frightful insult and means "Son of a dog," instead of some pleasant remark we had taught her, we thought we had better not educate her any more. My father adored Egypt, and it really was a marvellous place for him, as he used to be carried by sailors to all our picnics, and be able to join in everything. There was great rivalry between him and the Hakim over their respective guide books. The Hakim quoted Baedeker and Papa swore by Budge. One day we had been to a temple—I think it was Abousimble—which was too far for my father to be carried to, and when we returned Susan talked a lot about the quantities of bats which hung down from the ceiling. Papa was rather scornful, saying, fancy going all that way to see a lovely temple and talking of nothing but bats ; however, to our great joy, we discovered a bit in his beloved Budge which said, "The Temple at Abousimble is celebrated for the bats which live there in vast quantities," so Susan was triumphant.

We were out in Egypt the following winter, 1893-4, too, so it's rather difficult to remember what happened which particular year, but I know that it was the second year that we travelled out there with the painter Rousoff—he told us that he never painted from life but from memory. He would sit and look at some sunset or view and drink it all in, write down some little notes,

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and then come home and paint it indoors. I saw an exhibition of his things afterwards, and they were too lovely for anything. Another delightful person we met out there the second year was the novelist Hichens. We were tied up to the bank at Luxor next to a tourist boat ; nearly everyone on it had gone off on an expedition to the Tombs of the Kings, when suddenly we heard someone playing the piano most beautifully. Mother was longing to know who it was, so the Hakim crept on board and sat listening for some time ; when the man stopped, he said, " Do play that bit again," and so on, gradually worming himself into conversation and finally bringing him back triumphantly to the dahabeah for tea. Mr. Hichens became great friends with us after this, as he stayed on at the hotel at Luxor. He was most amusing and not the least bit like his books, which I always think are rather gruesome, though certainly very clever. John M. Cook, who was the " Son " in Thomas Cook & Son, was very interesting and nice too. He told us about his father starting the tourist business, and of how he was sent off when he was eighteen to personally conduct a whole lot of tourists round Switzerland ; and said he was extremely shy and terrified of them, but had to be very firm and pretend he knew all about the places, though he had never been there himself before.

There were the strangest mixtures of people on the tourist boats sometimes. Mr. Hichens told us that on his there were a bishop and a jockey, and they made great friends. The jockey, being in good training, always beat the bishop when it came to climbing up hills or towers. One time the jockey was seen standing on the top of the pylon of some temple, encouraging his rival, and when the latter came puffing and blowing

up to the top, the jockey clapped him on the back, shouting out, "So help me, Bob, you're the gaimest of the gaime," at which the bishop glowed with pride.

We got to know Lord Kitchener very well, and when we were in Cairo on our way back used to go and play in his garden at the Sirdaria. Lord Kitchener always walked back with us to the hotel in the evening, and sat and talked to Mother for ever so long. Mother tried to convert him to her British Israel theory, and they used to have most amusing arguments. She quoted something out of the Bible to prove her case ; he said that that was nothing—he himself was mentioned in the Bible as "a young man with a measuring reed," he being the first person sent to survey the Holy Land. Not long after he joined the Engineers, so she looked it out, and to tease him read out the context. "Yes, here it is," she said, "it describes you accurately—a young man with the appearance of brass," at which he was furious.

We got back to London at the end of April 1893, as we went on to Palestine after leaving Egypt, and that summer the Duke of York and Princess May were married. I remember so well Mother driving down to see the presents at White Lodge, Richmond Park, where Princess Mary of Teck lived then. It took a long time to go all the way with horses, and mother persuaded Susan and me to go with her and keep her company, but we made her promise before she started that she would not tell Princess May that we were outside in the carriage, as we only had our old pink cotton frocks on—the sort that are made with big tucks to let down for growing, and this being their second year of usefulness, the tucks had been let down and showed up a deeper pink where the rest of the frock had faded in

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the wash. When Mother got out of the victoria we drove on in it to the side of the house out of sight under a tree, and were just in the middle of one of our usual games of pretending, when, to our horror, we saw a footman approaching, and we knew our fate was sealed—"Would the young ladies come in?" so miserably we followed, and were announced into a large roomful of very smart people. Mother did not dare look in our direction ; she knew too well what reproachful glances we should fix on her. Princess Mary of Teck called us over and was charming to us, as always, but we felt all the other eyes in the room concentrated in lively scorn on our wretched pink cottons, until Princess May (now Queen Mary) came to the rescue and took us off to see the presents all by ourselves. As long as I live I never shall forget or cease to be grateful for that noble act, and bless her still for the kind heart that prompted her to do it. I can see her now and the frock she wore : it had a pointed yoke which was made of rows and rows of insertion lace, having baby ribbons threaded through of different colours and tying in separate little bows all down the front. We thought it too lovely for anything, and I expect it was the latest and smartest thing in the world then. Mother was full of apologies on our way home over her base behaviour, but she said Princess Mary had very kindly asked after us and said why had not Mother brought us down too, so she felt she couldn't very well pretend we weren't there in case we were seen out of the windows as we drove away.

The wedding was a grand affair ; we saw the procession from a house in Pall Mall belonging to some friends of Mother's, and it was the hottest day I ever remember. The soldiers lining the streets fainted in

rows, and a lot of the people in the crowd did too. One woman just below the balcony we were on, fainted, and there being no stretcher-bearers handy at the moment the policeman picked her up and put her in front of the crowd, where she speedily recovered, and was allowed to sit on the edge of the pavement. This gave her such a good view that someone else thought it would be an excellent dodge to do the same, so she called out that she was fainting and flopped about, but she was unlucky, as some stretcher-bearers happened to be passing at the time ; they picked her up on to their stretcher and rushed off with her before she could protest, and deposited her far away in some place with all the casualties, from where there was no hope of seeing the procession at all—a frightful disappointment for the poor lady.

I think it was the same summer that Mother took Susan to the Bristol Festival, because while they were away my father and I gave a luncheon-party, which consisted of the Prince (King Edward) and Uncle Marky. I did hostess, and it was a great success ; the Prince was so charming and easy to talk to and never made one feel nervous, and of course Uncle Marky was marvellous at making any party go, besides the fact that he knew the Prince so well—being in charge of his racing stable for many years. I remember the Prince was very pleased with a cream cheese from the dairy at Curraghmore, and after that Papa often sent one to Marlborough House as a present to him.

CHAPTER X

THE summer of 1894 was a very sad one for us, as we feared that Mother was really very ill, added to which my father had to have a serious operation for stone in the kidney, the Hakim having discovered that all the pain he suffered did not come from the injured spine. In consequence of this the doctors said that he must not be told anything depressing, so Susan and I had to keep it all a secret, run the house, and attend to everything. Papa had his operation in a big blue drawing-room looking on to the back, and his two nurses were in the huge red saloon in the front. A few days after this Mother had an operation in her room at the back on the same floor, and her two nurses were in the green sitting-room, also in front. Then Granny Beaufort came up to stay on purpose to help us, and no sooner did she arrive than she got very ill and had to have a nurse too, so we had five hospital nurses in the house at the same time. Miss Reiter had left us, and we were quite on our own.

I was fourteen at that time and Susan two years older, but we managed to struggle through this nightmare of disasters without any help from anyone. We suddenly became grown-up and took the whole responsibility of the family on our shoulders ; I put up my hair and lengthened my skirts, and felt as old as the everlasting hills. Unfortunately, Mother's operation was not a success, they found her illness was too far gone and they could do nothing, which was a terrible blow. I think the most agonizing part of it all was

sitting with my father, talking and laughing to cheer him up, and hearing him making wonderful plans of all he would do when he was better. He seemed to have convinced himself that he would be cured completely now, and so we chatted on, joining in with all his schemes to keep his spirits up, knowing only too well that nothing could save Mother's life, and dreading the time when Papa would be well enough to be told the truth. We dared not even cry, for fear he would see our eyes were red. I don't think we could have got through all those terrible weeks if Mother had not been so amazingly brave ; she never gave way, and was so utterly unselfish that she only thought of how she could help us to keep going. We were so busy that we had not the time to think. My father never recovered from the blow, when it fell ; all the light in his life seemed to be extinguished. The doctor had only given Mother nine months to live, and it seemed to paralyse us all. Papa being sunk in such a desperate depression, the doctors insisted that we should all go away for a cruise on the yacht, which was lying at Erith.

It was while at Cowes this August that Queen Victoria came on board. We had to anchor next to the Royal yacht. Mother was carried up to the deck-house to receive her, the sailors were drawn up on each side, and the Queen came nervously along, holding tightly on to some man who was helping her across the gangway. One of our sailors, who had expected to see her dressed in crimson robes and ermine like the picture portraits in Christmas numbers always represented her, with a crown upon her head, was deeply disappointed when he saw this tiny old lady in black with a plain bonnet on her head, and said, " Why, my mother's smarter looking than that," to everybody's consternation.

We yachted home to Curraghmore, and our darling Skom came back to live with us, which was the greatest help and comfort. Sometimes Mother seemed so well and cheerful that we simply couldn't believe how ill she was, and then a terrible attack would come on and we would be in great agony of anxiety and despair. Fortunately, we had a very clever man called Dr. Staunton, who came to Portlaw just then. He was much too good a doctor to be stuck in a country village really, but he was an international football player, and had had such a bad accident that he was advised to take on some easy job until he recovered. From the moment that Mother came home so ill he just concentrated on looking after her from day to day, trying to save her any discomfort or pain, and giving up his whole life to taking care of her. I think it was entirely due to his wonderful skill that she lived on for three years after the London doctors had given her up.

My father's spine injury certainly did seem better after the operation, and he was able to take more exercise. He was very fond of forestry, and I used to go out with him pruning and marking trees for days together. He walked for about twenty yards, and then sat on a little camp stool which I carried. We used to stay out all day, just having breakfast and dinner ; sometimes he would get so interested in the forestry work, or pruning the rhododendrons in the rhododendron ride that he forgot his depression for a time, but at other times it descended like a cloud upon him, and I could not rouse him at all. Mother had a terrible attack in January 1895, and for three weeks we hardly ever left her dressing-room night or day, waiting for the end ; my father was so distraught with the anxiety of it all that it began to affect his brain.

Although she recovered in the most miraculous way, Papa gradually became strange and suspicious. I seemed to be the only one who could manage him, and he clung to me in the most pathetic way. We went to London, thinking that that would distract his thoughts and cheer him up, but he only became worse and worse.

My sister was eighteen, and she had a season in London the next summer. She was taken out by our aunt, the Duchess of Abercorn (formerly Lady Mary Curzon—Granny Beaufort's half-sister). It was the first time that Susan and I had ever done anything separately, but we still slept in the same room, and I used to wake up when she came in to hear all about the party and help her undress ; bodices of ball-gowns laced up the back in those days, and were impossible to undo by oneself.

I remember the Duke and Duchess of York bringing little Prince David to see Mother one afternoon. He was about one year old and very nice and friendly ; we played with him on the floor while the others talked.

Susan went on her first country-house visit after the season was over to the Abercorns at Barons Court in the North of Ireland, and I was left to take charge of the family.

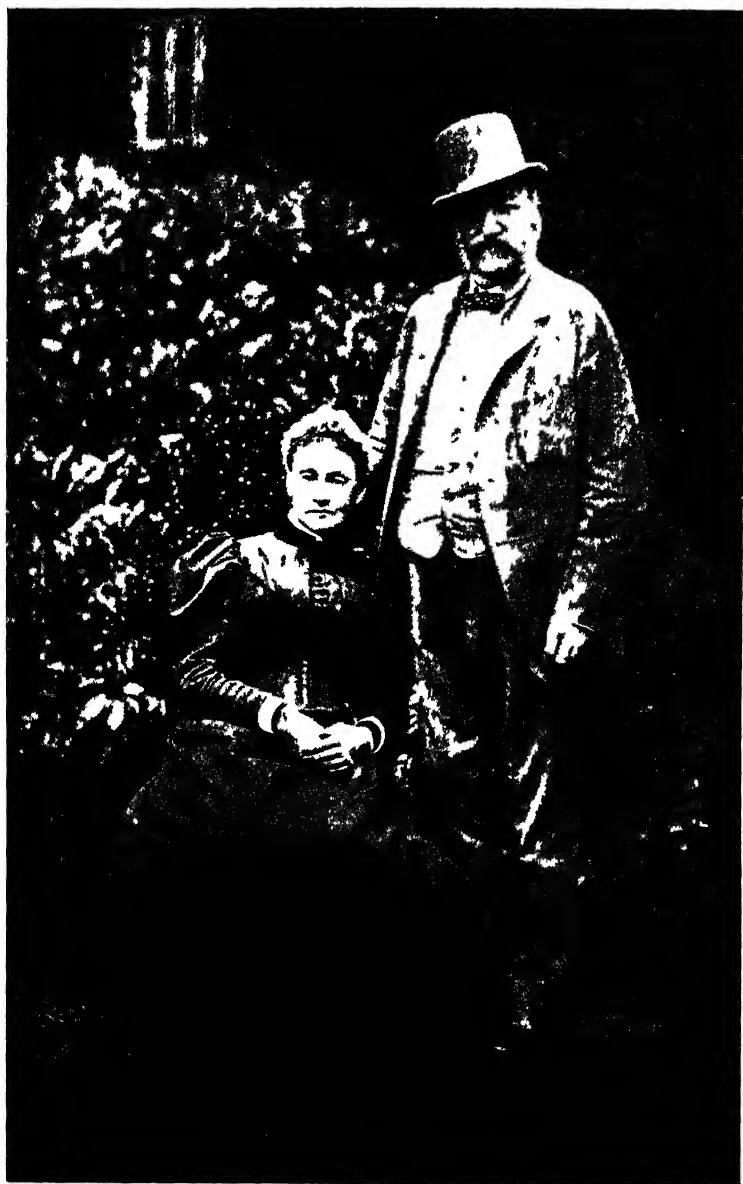
We went home on the yacht, and the whole voyage was an absolute nightmare. When we got to Curraghmore my father became so dreadfully ill and miserable that I hardly ever left him at all. Poor darling—it was terrible to see anyone in such agony of mind. The end came quite suddenly, and he died on October 23rd, 1895. He just came to the end of all endurance and shot himself, and though it was an awful shock to us in one way, to anyone who had been with him as constantly as I had, the greatest feeling was unutterable relief that he was

free from all his grief and pain. No one could have wished him to live—it was all so terribly cruel, and even now I cannot forget the haunting misery of those terrible months. I have no horror of suicide at all ; it seems to me to be the only way out when everything has gone from life. He might have lived until now, and would have been eighty-seven, all those years in torture ; how could anyone bear to think of anything so tragic ?

Skom and I went to Paris the following spring to study French, and I was to be confirmed there by an American bishop, but having climbed out with bare feet on to a stone balcony to watch a procession pass by I got pneumonia, and so was ill in bed when the confirmation took place ; we had to stay on there much longer than we intended, which was very depressing. Skom used to read to me to cheer me up ; one day she borrowed a book from someone in the hotel, and it happened to be *Six Common Things*, by Benson. She read the story of the children who had a tame stickle-back, which they kept in a basin, and when it came to the part where the little fish escaped down the sink, we were both so overwrought that Skom's voice broke down completely, she rushed from the room, and wept bitterly outside in the passage, sitting on a perfectly enormous steamer trunk belonging to some Americans next door. Old Lady Macclesfield, who was staying in the hotel, came along to ask how I was getting on, saw this sad sight, and thinking that I must have died suddenly, rushed into my room, where she found me in floods of tears too ; but all she could get out of either of us as to the reason of our grief was, " The stickle-back down the sink." For ever after she used to chaff me about our despair, and when I married she sent me a wedding-present of a little gold fish.

I was eventually confirmed all by myself in the middle of an ordinary service, which was rather shy work, particularly as it was the first day I had been up and out, and my knees were so weak they wouldn't do what they were told, so when I stood up at the chancel steps, having tottered over there with great difficulty, and the Bishop whispered, "Kneel down," I said, "I can't, my knees won't bend," so both Mr. Morgan (the Rector) and the Bishop had to seize me and push me down; then, when they said, "Get up," I couldn't move, so they had to haul me up between them.

Grandpapa and Granny Beaufort made up their minds about that time that they ought to hand over Badminton to Uncle Worcester, as they were getting old, so they went to live at a smaller place they had near Bristol, called Stoke Park. It was at the top of a huge hill, and one could see people crawling up the drive through the park for ages before they arrived. When we stayed with them there, we always had to get as excited as they did over any little thing that happened. There were a whole lot of race glasses hanging up on a screen, and we all used to rush to get them and fix them on to the moving object, having long arguments as to whether it was the old postman or the hectic postman who was appearing in the dim distance; a cry that there were cygnets on the pond would fetch us from all over the house; no one ever could agree as to the exact number of cygnets visible at any one time. Granny had begun to get rather pathetically old then, and was a little bit at the stage when you knew what remark she was likely to make at any given time of the day's preceedings. We became rather like cross-talk comedians; sometimes I would lead with her remark for a change, and then she would answer with mine.



DUKE AND DUCHESS OF BEAUFORT

Grandpapa still went up to London sometimes for a regimental dinner or some other thing, and when he was expected back one of us used to be posted at the window to give the alarm at the first sign of the carriage lamps coming through the gateway, then the race glasses were in full use with appropriate remarks. One day we waited and waited and had made sure he must have missed his train, when three-quarters of an hour later the carriage lamps appeared. Granny was almost dancing with fuss by this time ; we collected in the hall as usual, waiting for the carriage to drive up, and after he had been duly hugged by us all in turn, we demanded to know what had kept him. He told us that when he got out of the train at Stapleton Road the only other passenger left on the platform was a poor little woman from a third-class carriage ; when they got outside the station there was no fly for her to take, so he put her luggage on the roof of his brougham and gave her a lift to where she was going, which was in the opposite direction to Stoke. When he got as far as this with the story, Granny looked quite put out, and said, " Morny—I don't think I like you driving about with poor little women," in quite a jealous voice. Grandpapa giggled delightedly over this and answered, " You needn't worry, Nina ; I assure you that there were three little chaperons sitting on the back seat." It seemed that she had her little boys with her, so Granny had to forgive his " fast " behaviour, but I thought it was so truly characteristic of his kind heart. He must have been seventy-two or seventy-three at that time, and it was at the end of a longish journey. I think very few old gentlemen of that age even now would have driven this unknown shabby little family and their luggage all the way into Bristol late at night in the opposite direction to

home. But that was just like him ; he always took the trouble to notice what would be a help or a pleasure to anyone, and manage to do it or have it done as if it were for his own comfort.

Everybody in Bristol and round about asked Granny to open their bazaars for them, and Susan and I used to trail behind at these functions, carrying all the babies' woolly boots and tea-cosies that the stall-holders insisted on her buying. Granny put these in a special cupboard at Stoke, and they did not emerge again until she was asked for contributions to the next one, so they made a continuous round from one bazaar to another, which was just as well, as they were no use for anything else.

There generally was a local brass band at these festivities, and they embarrassed Granny dreadfully by playing " God Save the Queen " when she arrived and departed. I suppose they could not think of any other suitable tune from their repertoire. We went to various official functions, and sometimes to concerts with Grandpapa in Bristol ; his carriage always took short-cuts to these places, through the most incredible slums, where not even policemen would dare to go, but Grandpapa was never afraid of anybody, all the people seemed to love him ; at first sight of the carriage they would come rushing out of their houses calling to him and shouting, " The Duke, the Duke," he waving back in the most friendly manner, everybody recognizing him wherever he went. If the concert audience was rather a dull-looking one, he would turn to one of us and say, " My dear, I think the ugly-club are out to-night." Everybody amused him, and nothing put him out, a most charming and pleasant companion.

On my way back from Paris I stayed with Granny

Waterford, as 30 Charles Street had just been sold, and we had not got into Lennox House, Ovington Square, then. I found poor Granny very much changed ; the shock of my father's death seemed to have absolutely sent her into a sort of senile decay. The first evening I was there she brought me a huge scrap-book she had made ; she said, " You must read it, it will amuse you." To my astonishment it was absolutely filled with newspaper cuttings about my father's death, which certainly was not my idea of amusement. Poor old thing, she would sit gazing at the book for hours, and her memory failed so much that she always forgot when the other sons had been to see her last, so that instead of being pleased to see them when they did call, they got nothing but bitter reproaches. Uncle Marky declared that he would bring a knife with him and cut notches in her writing table each time to prove that he had been there. But soon the poor old lady's mind got a perfect blank, and she didn't know anyone. There she lay for years and years, and when she eventually died in 1905 everybody was astonished, and thought she had been dead for ages. What a tragedy, to live on without sense or use !

Granny Waterford had the most extraordinary taste in jewellery. She collected foxes' teeth, and had a tiara made of them, also a necklace and brooches—most distressing. Another set was made of green beetles. She had some quite nice things which were supposed to come to Susan and me, but during her long illness all these disappeared, and only the beetles and foxes' teeth remained, so we handed these over with great pomp to my sister-in-law Bertie, and said we felt they should become heirlooms, to her vast amusement.

CHAPTER XI

MY brother Tyrone came of age in April 1896, but we put off the celebrations until the autumn on account of my father's death. Such a week of school treats and beanos for employees, etc., finally ending up with a huge garden-party to the whole South of Ireland. Susan and I had worked so hard serving people with tea and buns day after day, that by the time the smart party took place we found ourselves still trying to feed the distinguished guests by hand, so to speak.

At the garden-party my mother lay out in her bath-chair and received everyone. A very pale and depressed little curate arrived, complete with bat and boots, to play tennis, and when the time came to say good-bye to her hours after, she said kindly, "Well, I hope you had a good game," to which he answered, his voice choked with emotion, "No—nobody asked me to play," and looked as if he would burst into tears, to Mother's despair, as she could not move away and lose him in the crowd; he really need not have been so frightfully upset, as there were only four tennis courts and about eight hundred people.

Some rather amusing books had been coming out at that time called *My Curates* by a Rector and *My Rectors* by a Curate, and this curate was so exactly like the description in the first book that even Mother could not help smiling at his pathetic, cross little face, while she tried to comfort him. I remember a charming story in one of these books about two village mothers bucking about their offspring to each other :

“ You should ’ear my Bob do ’is piece—’e says it lovely.

‘ The boy stood on his burning neck
When Sawpurtee had fled——’ ”

“ But I don’t understand—who was Sawpurtee? ”

“ Sawpurtee—why—’e must a been the captain of the ship.”

The one about the little girl saying her prayers in bed was not in those books, but I think it was going about then. Her mother came in, and was horrified that she was not kneeling up properly, but the child said, “ It’s all right, Mummy, God doesn’t mind,” and when asked how she knew that He didn’t, explained that she had said before starting to pray, “ I hope you won’t mind my lying down to say my prayers to-night, God—but I feel rather tired,” and she added, “ He answered, ‘ Don’t mention it, Miss Brooks.’ ”

Another story that took our fancy was about the deaf old lady whose servant came rushing in.

“ Ma’am, ma’am, the cistern’s burst, and it’s coming through the ceiling.”

Old Lady : “ What ! ”

Servant, shouting louder : “ The cistern’s burst, and it’s coming through the ceiling.”

Old Lady, unmoved : “ What ! ”

Servant, shouting louder : “ The cistern’s burst, and it’s coming through the ceiling.”

Old Lady—quite calmly : “ I never knew you had a sister.”

It is curious to think of all the changes that have happened in my lifetime. Neither my father nor my mother ever even saw a motor-car, though Mother was actually alive when Sir William Goff—who was a great

pioneer of mechanics—brought one over from France. The first time we saw it was at a garden fête at Gardenmarris, the Power O'Shees' place about nine miles from Curraghmore. Sir William brought it out there to help them make some money for their charity, and we all went for rides in this amusing-looking thing, which puffed and snorted along at about twelve miles an hour down a bit of straight road. We paid a shilling for each ride, and as we were carried along at this tremendous pace we all screamed at the top of our voices ; it was the right thing to do.

I suppose it is impossible for very young people to go on being depressed all the time, and though we knew how ill Mother really was, we got accustomed to her being an invalid, and she seemed so well and cheery in herself most of the time that in our souls we did not quite believe it was hopeless. When I look back on that last year of her life, it seems to have all been such fun. We kept open house at Curraghmore, and everybody who came got such a welcome.

I wish I could remember all the funny little things that happened. We had a locum tenens once who, when Mother asked him " Do you sing, Mr. ——," answered quite seriously, " Well, not exactly, Lady Waterford, but I always endeavour to make a joyful noise ! "

Mother was very anxious that I should come out in Dublin in January 1897. Lady Cadogan invited Susan and me up to the Castle to stay, and our Aunt Mary Abercorn, who was staying there at the same time, chaperoned us. Dublin Castle was great fun in those days : dances every night, and a sort of country-house life in the daytime.

Not very long after we came back from Dublin

Mother had an attack, but we were so accustomed to her having them that we never realized it was worse than her former ones ; so little did I think how serious it was, that I ran down into the hall after Dr. Staunton, when he was leaving, and said quite in the ordinary way, " How do you think Mother is this evening, doctor ? " I was paralysed by his saying very sadly, " I pray she may not recover this time " : it was the most frightful shock. Just as much almost as if I had never known about her illness before at all. He told me then that she would begin to suffer terribly if she lived on, and that the indigestion she had spoken of was really her illness spreading, but he could not bear her to know this, and had pretended to give her little remedies for it. She died on February 22nd, 1897, on an absolutely still, starlight night, just as she had always longed to do, half-conscious, and so peacefully that no one knew the exact moment of her going, and though we minded so very much, we were glad that she was at rest.

Mother would have been forty-one on the following 26th of March, but I never realized that she was young to die. I suppose no one ever has really believed that one's father or mother was ever young like oneself. I was seventeen at the time, and very old for my age after all we had gone through, but I remember quite well thinking it was very sad for us that Mother should die ; still, I supposed it was inevitable that people must die when they got old, and it was only when I actually became forty-one myself that it came home to me how hard it was for her.

As a matter of fact, I never have thought of either my father or mother as being really dead. They are always somewhere about. I can hear Mother's lovely

cackle of laughter when someone tells a funny joke, and any little amusing incident brings them back to me at once.

It is impossible to convey to anyone how delightful and ridiculous they both were, so quick-witted that nobody ever had to explain anything, and yet so human and kind, no pretence or affectation, and absolutely free from all hypocrisy, quite apart from their being my father and mother, or even of all the fun we had together. As human beings, I liked them both so tremendously.

CHAPTER XII

WE went abroad to Italy as soon as we could after Mother died, and took our maid "Huddy" with us. My brother also insisted that we should have Bone with us too. Now Bone was an institution more than a butler. He had originally come to us as a very young man, when we were children, as valet to Papa, and his father was either a gardener or gamekeeper at Latimer. Old Lord Chesham was so fond of him that, whenever he met Mother, he always said, "How de do; how's James Bone?" all in one breath. He was with us out in Egypt, and after my father died he took charge of us all, and was our great standby and comfort. He was marvellous at all games, and whatever fad my brother took up, Bone always had to do it too, rushing up hills at cockcrow in the morning, or tobogganing down them in the winter, football, cricket, everything. Tyrone had a squash-rackets court built at Curraghmore, as he could play quite well, and he enjoyed beating Bone for once, who was quite new to the game. I remember after I was married, when we were staying there one time, and my brother was out hunting, Bone came to my husband and persuaded him to come and coach him at squash, as he said, "I do want to beat his lordship so." Sure enough, with a little advice and training he got so good no one could touch him. Years afterwards, after my brother died, he even learnt lawn tennis, as he thought one of my nieces was not being properly taught, so he undertook it and used to play with her and coach her for hours.

In the end he had a very tragic death. Some boys were coming home from school, and they took a short-cut over the lake, which was frozen, but the ice was too thin, and one of them fell in. The others ran for help, and Bone, who had got a very severe cold in his head, never hesitated for a moment, but rushed straight out and plunged in. He saved the boy, but the ice-cold water on top of his cold gave him pneumonia and he died. No one can imagine what a crushing blow this was to us all, even to Susan and me who had our own homes then. He was just part of the family, and somehow his death seemed to bring home our losses to us more than anything else could have done. It was rather pathetic that Goodchild, who had been my brother's valet and was out at the War at the time of Bone's death, wrote at once, saying that though he knew he could never be as wonderful as Bone, all he hoped was that if he was still alive when the War was over, he might come back and do his best to take his place ; and he would not take the Commission which was offered to him in his regiment, as he said that it might be embarrassing when he was living as butler at Curraghmore, as he hoped to do.

However, in 1897 when we went abroad, Bone was very young and energetic still. He and Huddy always hurried off to the cemetery at each place we visited and sent their friends picture post-cards of graves, but we could never get them to take any interest in old churches and pictures and all the correct things.

We went to Rome where our cousin Mary Crawshay lived, and she was too angelic to us. The Crown Princess of Sweden (Queen Victoria of Sweden, who died a short time ago) was in Rome at that time, and when Mary told her we were there, knowing that she

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had been a friend of Mother's, she sent for us to come and see her one afternoon, but added to Mary that we "need not wear our tiaras," which was lucky!!!

It was at Mary Crawshay's lovely flat that we first met Dr. Axel Munthe, and of course the moment he heard all about our sorrows his kind heart made him adopt us at once. I shall never forget our first sight of him rushing in quite late one evening with two dogs—a tall, thin, loose-limbed man with a beard, and the most wonderful, penetrating blue eyes with a twinkle in them, half angelic and half comic—it would be impossible to be affected or pretentious in front of him. He was like a fresh breeze scattering anything that was not real, an overmastering personality, with an iron will, that drove one along, always making one do what was sensible and best. There was a very ultra-artistic and highbrow friend of Mary's there that evening, and she began letting off epigrams and poetic remarks that sounded very deep and intellectual. Dr. Munthe just sat without speaking for a few minutes, shaking his head up and down, but when she ended up by looking sadly romantic and saying with a sigh, "*Eh bien ! c'est la cristallisation de la Vie,*" and we were all looking very impressed, Munthe suddenly rose up and seizing her by one arm shook her backwards and forwards, saying, "Now, vat do you mean by that ?" Of course the poor lady was completely shattered, as she couldn't possibly say what it meant, it having no meaning whatever. The funny part is that nobody ever really minds what he says or does—one can't somehow ; though if anyone else tried to do or say one-quarter the things he does, he would probably have been murdered long ago.

Dr. Munthe asked us that evening where we were going, and when he heard that we had not made any settled plans, he just brushed all our suggestions on one side and decided that we were to go to Naples. So off we went to Naples quite meekly, and the day after we got there he suddenly appeared, taking us round with him to all sorts of interesting places. He then announced that he had arranged for us to go to Sorrento, bundled us into the steamer and took us there. I must say Sorrento was lovely, but in any case it would not have made any difference, he just planted us out at the Hôtel Vittoria, and told us to stay there till he came south again. We had a balcony outside our sitting-room hanging over the sea, and it was heavenly sitting out there in the evenings ; even the wailing cries of the boatmen from the different hotels chanting—Hôtel Vittoria, Hôtel Tramontana, when the little steamer from Naples drew up opposite twice a day, sounded most romantic and enchanting coming across the water ; we used to go and lie in the orange gardens high up over the Bay. For one lire they would let you stay for hours and eat all the oranges you could. Why is it that oranges with leaves and stalks on them all hot from the sun taste so much more delicious than cold shiny oranges do over here ?

After we had been there about a fortnight Dr. Munthe appeared out of the blue one wet afternoon with the Crown Princess and launched her into our untidy sitting-room without any warning. Skom had been writing letters, and they were all spread around ; Susan had been sketching and I had been doing an enormous piece of embroidery ; everything was lying about, and at the time of their arrival we had got tired of these occupations and were all sitting in different parts

of the room, making a frightful row, practising our "musics," for Munthe had decreed that it would be a good thing for us to have guitar and mandolin lessons, so Susan was struggling with her guitar and Skom and I were making excruciating sounds with our mandolins, the more so as the fingers of our left hands had just got to the sorest stage, so we were only pressing down the treble strings in the most delicate and feeble fashion. Munthe came back by himself in the evening. He told us that the Princess had been in a very depressed and discontented mood, so he had said, "You shall come and see those poor children, it will do you good," and though it was probably the last thing in the world she would have chosen to do in her mood of the moment, Munthe brought her along willy-nilly. We always dated from that moment a gradually growing dislike for us which became evident in her later on. Dr. Munthe said that they were going to Amalfi, so he had taken rooms for us too ; we each hired a carriage for the drive round on the edge of the cliff, and started one behind the other. We were the first to move off, and they came on about twenty yards behind. I was sitting with my back to the horses, so each time we went round one of the many hundred bends in the road I found myself looking straight at the Princess ; at first she would call out some remark and wave her hand, but after a bit our greetings degenerated into just a watery smile. Finally, we got so tired of each other's appearance, we mutually stared out to sea.

When we arrived at Amalfi we found we had to walk up about a thousand steps, so pushing and hurrying two porters with our "bagaglio" in front of us, we hurried up panting and puffing, each with a "music" tightly clasped in our hands, as we dreaded getting

entangled with the Princess's party, and somehow felt that she would hate us to tramp just behind her and see her all dishevelled and out of breath. Luckily for us she was not very strong, so went to bed early, and Munthe was able to come and spend the evenings with us, sometimes climbing up the hills in the moonlight. The Princess was not well one day, so she stayed in bed, and he was able to take us to Ravello, but I fancy this expedition was definitely looked on as unnecessary, and we were never really approved of again.

The day of our return to Sorrento we got up early and left at cockcrow, as we thought another drive in such close proximity would be very embarrassing. It was not very long after our visit to Amalfi that a great bit of the rock there fell into the sea quite suddenly, taking most of the hotel with it.

There was no church at Sorrento, but the Hôtel Tramontana caught a travelling clergyman one Sunday, and sent forth an ultimatum that all should go to the service they were arranging in the drawing-room. There was a little harmonium which they had routed out from somewhere, and this was left open with a hymn-book on the top as an invitation to some valiant soul to come and play a hymn. However, no one was brave enough to do so. In spite of this the clergyman announced a hymn in the right place. He said, "We will now sing 'Rock of Ages, cleft for me,'" and there was a dead silence; even if we had had the note to start on all might have been well, but as it was, one person would bravely start "rock" right down in his boots and then blushing hotly stop dead, while another would make an effort with a "rock" in a high treble, other "rocks" were hurled about the room, but in each case they died away in utter confusion, until the parson with

a deep sigh shut up his hymn-book and went on with his service.

Dr. Munthe came down to Sorrento several times after that on his way to and from his house San Michele at Ana Capri, and of course we went over there to see it, but eventually came back to Rome, and while we were there he took us on the most delightful trip to a little place called Subiaco, up in the mountains. We went a good way by a local train and the rest by diligence, Munthe cycling beside us. There were some priests behind us in the diligence, and when they heard us talking English they spoke in English too, so, for fun, we began to speak French, and they followed suit. Determined not to be outdone, Susan and I began to speak to each other in a secret-code language that my father invented : it consisted in putting " g " before every vowel. The only exception being the word yes—" yeges " being too easily spotted, and might give the clue, so for yes one always said " Verily yea," which sounded rather like " Vi—gergelgy-y-gay," and generally baffled anyone who was getting hot on the scent. The priests got frantic over our new language ; they couldn't imagine what dreadful country it could come from.

At Subiaco we all stayed at a convent, and each had a tiny cell to sleep in ; we were called at 4 a.m. by the nuns, and climbed high up in the mountains to see the sunrise, absolutely gorgeous. I think Skom must have got a chill on this expedition, as directly we got back to Rome she became terribly ill with dysentery. Dr. Munthe was too angelic, and nursed her with the greatest care. She had the most appalling headaches, and I have seen him over and over again when he came just pass his hands over her head, hardly touching

her, and take it right away in his own fingers. She would fall back and sleep for hours absolutely peacefully when a moment before she had been distracted with pain, banging her head against the wall at the side of her bed. Skom had a very well-meaning but incredibly stupid and clumsy English nun to nurse her, who announced on arrival that she was always sent for to nurse the sick and dying!! which was a cheerful thought. She got on Skom's nerves to such an extent that she became quite ferocious. However, the holy woman never noticed, or perhaps she thought Skom was always like that, because she said to us, " I like Miss Gomme ; she's so even, that's what I say, so nice and even ! "

It began to get very hot in Rome, and everybody else went away except us and the Crown Princess, who was laid up at another hotel. Dr. Munthe used to take Susan and me about with him everywhere. He had a pony and trap, and we would do groom when he left it outside all the queer places he used to visit. The poor people in Rome absolutely worshipped him. If any of them were ill or in trouble it didn't matter what time, night or day, they only had to send and he would come. He cured them of their ills, he patched up their quarrels, and he gave them everything he had in the world. If a family was to be evicted he would come down, and with a sort of divine wrath, fix the landlord with a piercing eye, making him feel the meanest of God's creatures. But simple kindly people were never frightened of him. Children would run towards the pony-cart when they saw it coming in the distance, with little bunches of flowers and welcoming eyes, and the old people would come hobbling out, with blessings on their lips. Whole families brought all their diffi-

culties to him, and would stand round waiting for his decision, going off content with whatever he decided.

He used to come and have his meals with us very often at the hotel, and taught us all sorts of new ideas, such as to always take a piece of cheese when it was handed round and leave it on the side of your plate, as then the waiters could slip it into their pockets and take it home to eat themselves, or give to their families.

When Skom got well enough to move we went up to Venice in the same train as Munthe and the Princess, but we lay low and didn't show ourselves. He had given Skom a tonic which she was religiously taking, but in the train he happened to come to our carriage when she was uncorking the bottle. He said, "What is that rubbish?" and when he heard that it was his tonic he threw it out of the window, saying, "All that is great nonsense." He said he had had an awful night in the train, as he shared a sleeping car with the Princess's equerry, who would keep the windows shut. "He's a regular Svede," he said with a grin, being of course a Swede himself. But then of course Munthe is Munthe, and a law unto himself; made on a completely original pattern from all the rest of the world.

He was amazingly good to us at Venice too, taking us to all sorts of tiny out-of-the-way places, to see the real life of the people, not "English Colony" or "the smart thing," but the real heart of the place, and everywhere that he went the cries of joy that went up were a revelation. By that time even Dr. Munthe had realized that we were not really appreciated in Royal quarters, and if he was in our gondola with us he would suddenly call out, "Here's the Crown Princess," and we would all fall in a heap on the floor of the gondola till we were

safely past ; however, this did not prevent him taking us with him on a most thrilling expedition to Ferrara and Ravenna, marvellous old towns. Ravenna used to be a frightfully busy and smart place long ago, but it was like a city of the dead when we saw it, with grass growing up in the streets between the cobble-stones. The best hotel in the town was the most old-fashioned place, too attractive and simple for words. When we drove up from the station Dr. Munthe got out and started arranging about rooms. The landlord said he had two rooms only, each with two beds in it. Munthe said very well, but he must put three beds in one room and one in the other ; however, the landlord said no, that was not sensible—two in one room and two in the other. We were sitting in the carriage in fits of laughter, as we understood enough Italian to follow the argument which raged. Dr. Munthe, who talked Italian just like a native, waved his arms about, and so did the other man ; in the end Munthe got his way as usual, but as there was only a very rickety door which would not shut between the two rooms, and he had to come through ours to get in and out of his own, a dormitory would have done just as well. We went to the Opera at Ravenna, and heard *La Bohème* long before it came over here. The élite of the place had boxes and entertained in them. They were so poor that they never could ask anyone to their houses, so this was how they did their hospitality. All the floor of the house was pit, and cost us about 2 lire a piece for our seats.

When Dr. Munthe left Venice we missed him so much that we did not care to stay any longer, so we went on to the Italian Lakes and stayed at Bellaggio. I know it was lovely there, but to me it always seems like

the back-cloth of a scene in some musical play, and I expected to see Tyrolean peasants in native costume come rushing on to make a chorus. We disgraced ourselves completely at Bellaggio on the Sunday we were there. There was to be an evening service, and we happened to walk by the church about an hour before it was to start. A little woman darted out at us as we went by and said, "I beg your pardon, but I wonder if you would come and help to sing in the choir this evening." We were quite flattered, and said of course we would. She looked very relieved, and said, "My husband always says, 'Someone is sent,'" which gave us an uneasy feeling, but when we eventually walked into the church, the body of which was filled with rather proud-looking old ladies, we were horror-stricken to see that the choir was completely empty, and there was only the little woman sitting at an American organ just behind; however, there was no escape. She was peering down the aisle and beckoned us to come up. The awful part was that she insisted on having what I think is called a "fully choral" service even to "Amens." She played and sang in a quavering voice; however, we jibbed at that, and let her quaver by herself. She chose very elaborate chants and changed the tune in the most unlikely places, so that we were nearly all of us singing different tunes. Skom didn't make much noise, and Susan had a sore throat and mostly hummed, but I roared at the top of my voice, and unluckily being farthest away from the organ, was the last to be converted to the new tune when it was changed. We could see the congregation gazing at us in amazement, and we got so nervous it only made us worse. I never shall forget our shame; we did not dare to come down to dinner at the hotel that evening,

and next day went home to England. Somehow, we felt that Bellaggio was no safe place for us.

This rather reminds me of something that happened in a small church in a village in Ireland, where a dear old man, called Mr. Wray Palliser, lived. He had a very loud voice, but could not hear very well, so when the parson gave out the number of the hymn for "Conquering kings their titles take," he got hold of a different number, and found "From Greenland's icy mountains," which he knew very well, so in spite of the harmonium playing the first tune, he bellowed the other one with such fervour that by the end of the first verse half of the choir nearest him had been converted to his choice; by the end of the second verse the other singers wavered and gave way, and at the third verse even the organist gave up the unequal struggle, and "Greenland's icy mountains" prevailed. Wray Palliser had a marvellous brogue, and one time when my father was hunting in Leicestershire he came over to stay and succeeded in being bucked off on to a large heap of stones, in front of all the smart hunting folk at the meet: however, nothing daunted, old Wray picked himself up, and with blood pouring down his face, remarked cheerfully, "If it wasn't for the nose, the eye was out of me," and got back on his horse.

Mr. Palliser was a great character, but he hated any nonsense. When he was very ill Dr. Staunton, who was attending him, sent for a Dublin specialist to see if anything could be done, but the doctor gave no hope, and when they were both sure that he could not live many more hours, the Dublin man said that he thought Mr. Palliser ought to be told, particularly as he was very comfortably off, and there was no direct heir, as he might want to make special arrangements. He bent

over him and said very seriously, " Mr. Palliser, I must ask you something. Is your house in order ? " but Wray didn't understand such foolish talk, and all he said very pugnaciously was, " What's the matter with the house ? " which made it rather difficult to continue on those lines. Dr. Staunton, who knew that Mr. Palliser hated all such tactful methods of wrapping up plain facts, came forward, and said, " He means you're a dying man," upon which old Wray was furious and kept on muttering, " Why didn't he say so ? talking about the house ; such tomfoolery," and glared at the poor specialist so fiercely that Dr. Staunton had to bundle him out of the room. So the dear old man died as he had lived, full of pluck and without any frills.

CHAPTER XIII

DURING the summer of 1897 my brother took a house for us on the river near Wraysbury called Remenham, as he was quartered at Windsor then. It was quite a big house and very comfortable. We had some of the servants over from Curraghmore, and Tyrone kept his horses there, it being quite near the polo ground at Datchet. We had a very good time, as he used to bring back all his brother officers to have baths after polo and stay for dinner, so we got to know them very well, which was a great help to me when I came out in London the following year. Tyrone was always called " Bugs " in the regiment, so we were " Bugs's sisters," and Evelyn and Norah Hely-Hutchinson—who stayed with us a lot—were " Bugs's sisters' little friends." They used to tease us and say they could see it was an Irish house, as nothing ever got mended. Someone had pulled the bell too hard and it came right out of its appointed place and lay lolling on the front steps, so nobody bothered about the front door, but just came round by the garden and settled themselves down in hammocks or garden chairs whether we were there or not, which saved a lot of trouble. There was a little path down to the river and a boathouse, and on non-polo days anyone who happened to think he loved either of us used to row or punt backwards and forwards along our reach of the river in the hope that we might be about on the bank or in a boat. Tyrone used to get frightfully upset over these little attentions. He said it would be so disagreeable for him if anyone proposed

to us and we refused them—a truly brotherly point of view.

He had a sort of double dog-cart with a pair of grey horses which he drove, but he was the vaguest person that ever lived, and getting round a corner or through a gate was rather nervous work, as he generally brought the gate-post along too. His friends used to say that they felt it their duty to drive with him so as to test their nerve in case of a war! General Brocklehurst was Colonel of the Blues then. He had been a life-long friend of Mother's, and was the most delightful man in the world, so it made the whole difference to us knowing him so well.

Tyrone was very keen on polo, but like the others used to use the most blood-curdling language, and one day General Brocklehurst was umpiring for a match and happened to be near enough to hear some of my brother's comments, but all he said in a surprised voice was, "Dear, dear, and such a mild-faced boy, too." I think Brock's definition of a "bore" was the best that ever has been thought of: "Some fool who will talk to you about himself, when you want to talk to him about yourself." He had a great theory that when one got upset or in a fuss about anything one should say to oneself, "Nothing matters very much and very few things matter at all," and if you try it you will see what a calming effect it has on your nerves.

Remenham was the sort of house that any burglar would have gloried in. There were practically no doors or windows that you couldn't get in through if you tried. Luckily no one did, but we had many false alarms. The owners had left a poodle for us to look after, and this dog snored in such a life-like manner that one night Susan woke up and was sure that it must be a

burglar under her bed, so she gave one flying leap, ran to the door, and just before she went out announced firmly, "There is nothing of any value in this room except me, and I am about to leave."

The sloping roof of the verandah was under my window, and as it was covered with creepers anyone could have pulled himself up with the greatest ease, so one night I was horrified to hear gentle steps coming across the lawn and path, and then sounds of something climbing up the creeper. I thought I had better not wait until he actually got in, so rushed to the window, put my hand out, and seized what I took to be the hair on the top of the burglar's head—however, to my great relief, there was only a pathetic mee-ow from the Persian cat.

Another time our maid, Huddy, became very ill in the middle of the night. She struggled to the door of her room calling, "Help ! help !" and then collapsed in a faint. I happened to hear the cries, and thought someone was being murdered, so ran down the passage and through the swing door in the darkness, where I met a wild-looking figure, whom I took to be the murderer, hurrying away from the scene of his crime. I seized him, and we struggled for a few seconds until I discovered that it was Bone. He recognized me at the same moment, so we desisted and went in search of the corpse together.

It was while we were at Remenham that we had the distressing idea of going on a bicycling tour. Some friends at Oxford had invited us to stay, so in spite of the protests of all and sundry, we started off one very hot day. The first stage was to end at Henley. We sent a footman on there by train with our luggage to engage rooms. However, after a large lunch at

Maidenhead, we felt rather lazy and put ourselves and our bicycles into a launch steaming happily up the river. We stopped it a little outside Henley, and getting on to our bicycles pedalled in, looking very cool and fresh, to the footman's great astonishment. However, we did not let on about the launch, but answered his enquiries in quite an off-hand way, saying, "Oh no! we were not at all tired," and off he went home to report of our progress to the household. We stayed that night at Henley, but the next morning it was hotter than ever, and we all felt perfectly awful. Skom said she was sure she was sickening for something. Susan had twisted her ankle and I had rubbed my heel. We thought we would go by train the rest of the way, but unfortunately forgot that the hire of the launch had used up nearly all our money, and after paying the hotel bill all we had over was five and ninepence.

I was entrusted with this sum, and limped down to the station, asked the man at the ticket office, "How far towards Oxford will you take three people and three bicycles for five and ninepence?" He said, "The fare is ——!" But I told him that had nothing to do with it, and spreading out the five shillings and the nine pennies on the counter to tempt him, bargained until I got tickets to some out-of-the-way village about six miles from Oxford. We bundled our bicycles into the van, and felt we never wanted to see them again, but we and they were both thrust forth to our doom at the appointed station, and we had to ride through an absolutely tropical heat—on a road inches deep in dust—for hours and hours, crawling along at a snail's pace, with awful creaks and groans. When we got to our destination we were much too exhausted to ring the bell or do anything but just fall off our bicycles and lie

rather broke, so she accepted an offer to sing professionally at a musical party in some big house, but when the evening came she got in such a panic that she rushed round to Charles Street and told Mother she could not do it. However, Mother soothed her, and said she would come and accompany her—to see her through—so they gave the fee to the real accompanist and let her go. Mother, dressing up in a neat black frock and bonnet to suit the part, arrived at the back door, and was shown up into the room. She sat down at the piano, and when the time came played for Mrs. Pearce and gave her so much confidence that she sang her very best and was a huge success. After the songs were over Mother slipped away ; no one even looked in her direction, though heaps of her friends were at the party. In those days artists were not so much the fashion, and anyone who came to play the accompaniment to a song was less than the dust.

Ovington Square reminds me of the most supremely tiresome German governess called Fraulein Cludius, who, for some unknown reason, seemed to be always hanging round our necks about that time. She had been with us several times in our youth, filling any gaps between the going and coming of governesses, but ever since I can remember she certainly seemed raving mad to me. She cried a good deal, and would wear a thick black net veil through which one could see enormous tears pouring down her cheeks. Fraulein was always starving, and we used to feel we ought to do something about it.

There never was anyone with such completely hopeless and senseless plans for making money. About this time the *Ring of the Nibelungen* was to be performed in London, and she came rushing in one



BLANCHE MARCHIONESS OF WATERFORD

day with a great idea—that she would give lectures on the “ Ring ” to ardent Wagnerians. We did not like to damp her off too much, so said perhaps we could collect some people to come to the lectures, but what was our horror to learn on her next visit that she had actually engaged a huge concert hall for the course of lectures at vast expense. As we had a horrid feeling that about six people would form the audience and that we should be left to pay for the hall, we quickly went round and cancelled her arrangements, explaining that she was quite mad, so mercifully they let her off without any damages. In the end we had the lecture—for indeed one was quite enough—in our drawing-room, and luckily only the three of us were present. I have never seen the “ Ring,” and can’t remember the exact details of what she said, but it was all about someone called “ Haaren,” and she seemed delighted with him, in spite of all the crimes she declared he had committed. The lecture went somewhat in this style: “ Ah, Haaren, he did murder his grandmother—ah ! I do love Haaren ! ” I may be maligning the poor gentleman, but if so, the blame must be put down entirely to Fräulein Cludius.

Lord Roberts was Commander-in-Chief in Ireland at that time, and he was living at the Royal Hospital in Dublin. His second daughter, Edwina, was a great friend of my sister-in-law’s, as they had been out in India for such a long time together when they were children. Edwina came down to Curraghmore for Christmas, and the Roberts’s very kindly asked Susan and me to stay for the first week of the Dublin season. I was keen on hockey in those days, and the day before we were to go had been playing in a match. It came on to snow, but we did not pay any attention, and got

soaked to the skin ; I put on a dry coat on top and went out to tea—a thing I do not recommend anybody to do. The result was that I felt very ill, and on the third day of my visit retired to bed with pneumonia. Any other family in the world would have thrown me out on to the dust heap for being such a nuisance, and rightly so, but the Roberts's were too angelic for words. They put off all their other guests, moved me into the best bedroom, got two nurses, and proceeded to care for me as if I were their only child, though they had never set eyes on me till three days before. Susan stayed on by way of doing the loving sister, and had the most marvellous time, being mounted, going to all the dances and to everything that was going on. I was laid up nine weeks, and, of course, by that time we had become part of the family.

The evening that I was taken ill we were to have gone to a Flower Ball at the Castle—it was an impromptu fancy-dress affair—which Lady Cadogan had only arranged to have at twenty-four hours' notice—so we went to Switzers to look for flowers the afternoon before. I was rather fond of mauve, and as I had a white frock thought of having clematis. While I was looking at some in the shop a very pretty girl came up in the most friendly way and gave advice, saying that she was afraid the colour would not look well at night. She took a lot of trouble to find some pink roses which she said would suit me better. I was rather surprised at her interest, as, though I knew her, she was not a girl who took much notice of other girls as a rule, but I did not bother about it, and as Susan liked the roses and suggested that we should go dressed alike, we got them and arranged them on our frocks. On the day of the dance I had such a headache that I lay down in

the dark, and when it was time to dress for dinner Lady Roberts took my temperature, which, being 102°, decided the matter, so to bed I went.

Reggie Chaplain was one of Lord Roberts's A.D.C.s, and at dinner he was in despair, as his fiancée had just sent him a note to say that her flower dress had not arrived, so she would not be able to go. We had not met her then, but as my frock was ready—with rose bouquet and everything to match—we sent it all round to her as it was. She put it on and went to the ball. Everybody kept coming up to Susan and pointing out to her that there was a girl dressed exactly like her, but what was far more amusing was, that the pretty girl who had helped me so kindly in the shop was dressed as a mauve clematis! When the night came for the Roberts's dance I was still very ill, but as it took place in the gorgeous old hall in the Pensioners' part of the hospital, I did not hear anything except the carriages driving up and away. I believe my room was usually used as the ladies' cloakroom, but they arranged another for that occasion. However, this did not prevent several people straying into my room at various times during the evening. One mother with two daughters insisted on putting their cloaks on top of me, and when one of them said, "Look, Mother, there's somebody in the bed," they all came over and stared at me with the greatest interest. I had lost my voice completely, so just stared back. My night nurse, who should have been there to protect me, was peeping at all the gay doings downstairs. She was the sort of woman who leant over you, breathing heavily, asking you if you were asleep, and if you kept your eyes shut to save you from committing murder would tell the doctor that you had slept all through the night like a little child.

CHAPTER XIV

OUR Aunt Mary, Duchess of Abercorn, presented me in London in 1898. Queen Victoria held the Drawing-rooms in St. James's Palace in those days in the daytime, so that everyone looked too ridiculous for words sitting all dressed up with evening gowns, veils, and feathers at eleven o'clock in the morning in their carriages along the Mall. As there was only the one drive nearest the Green Park, the carriages were allowed to stand down all the other avenues, and were not in the way. Crowds came to stare at them, and their comments were very unflattering sometimes. We were very lucky, as Uncle Hamley (Duke of Abercorn) was Groom of the Stole, so Mary always had the entrée, and as we were with her we had it too, and could drive straight in without waiting. The actual Drawing-room (it was not called a "Court" then) was in quite a small room with a door at each end. The Queen sat on a low chair, and as she was very small indeed, you had to make a deep curtsy to get down low enough. She put out her hand, which you took and kissed, and if you were a Peeress or a Peer's daughter, she kissed your cheek almost at the same time. All the other royalties stood in a close line next to her, which was very convenient, for you really pulled yourself up by their hands, which you shook in turn as you made less and less deep curtsies all along the line; sometimes there were eight or ten of them, and when you got to the last you shot out of the far door. Trains were very long, so they would not let you in at the first door

before the person in front of you was finished. There was a row of equerries and officials standing facing the royalties, which made a sort of lane, but I must say shaking hands with them all was a very great help and steadied one tremendously, besides the fact that no one was looking on made one far less nervous.

Mary Abercorn was our guardian, too, and was the most kind and charming chaperon and friend that anyone could have. She had been so good to all her nieces-in-law and taken so many of them out in London that she was always in the swim and asked to every dance as a matter of course. Her eldest girl, Lady Phyllis Hamilton, came out the year before Susan, so that when I started my first season there were three of us to take. It was very funny to see the different way our disasters took people. Most of the hostesses were extra nice and went out of their way to ask both of us to their dances, which was very unusual. They generally would put the mother's or chaperon's name on the card—Lady—Beresford or whoever it was underneath—leaving it to either of the daughters to come. Just a few people thought it not worth their while to be particularly nice to orphans like us who could not return any hospitality, but as Mary had our names printed on her card under Phyllis's they did not dare leave both of us out in case of annoying her.

What awful clothes we used to wear—a very wide skirt just off the ground, and the separate body very much trimmed coming down on top of it with the belt sewn round the edge; sometimes a plain white satin skirt and several different bodies to wear with it, but all bodies, both day and evening, had a horrible sort of strap inside to keep them down at the back and this was made half an inch

tighter than the dress itself, so that you endured agonies of tight lacing just over your digestion quite unnecessarily. The sleeves of ball-dresses were very large, generally short and puffy, with real lace hanging down in a flounce below and long white gloves right up to the very top of one's arm, which cost 18s. a pair, and were a frightful extravagance, as the hand part got dirty or torn, and the rest was no further use. It was not the fashion to take off your gloves even for supper : you opened the eight buttons at your wrist and slipped your hand out, leaving the loose bit flapping or tucked it in at the back. Evening dresses were worn very low, in fact, disgusting one would think them now. Some of the faster married ladies wore theirs so low that they were apt to make their friends exceedingly nervous.

Only people who owned very big houses gave dances, but as there were such a lot of large houses in those days and they were all inhabited by well-known families, there were plenty of balls to go to. Society was so much smaller that there was generally only one dance a night, but if you were asked at all you probably knew every living soul in the room, and most of them were relations or great friends. The chaperons sat all round the edge of the ball-room, and their girls stood in front of them, so that if the latter did not dance much the poor mother behind had a very dull time, not seeing anything but their backs. Mary used to say she didn't mind what we did as long as we danced and enjoyed ourselves, as it depressed her so much having three of us making a screen round her. Phyllis was always a huge success, and we were lucky to have got to know so many of my brother's friends, so we generally had good fun. But I remember one ball where for some reason no men turned up at all. When we got to it there were

about forty girls, and the host, who was very short and fat, was the only man in the room. To my intense horror he insisted on asking me to dance ; we whirled round the room, the only couple dancing. I was five feet eight and a half inches, which was looked on as being very tall then, so I towered above him and tried not to notice the grins of the other girls standing about. A few more men came in later, but by that time there were almost four hundred girls, and in the end they just danced together.

The best balls were undoubtedly those at Montagu House. The Duchess of Buccleuch, who was Uncle Hamley's sister, had a perfect genius for entertaining and was too marvellously kind for words to us and everybody, but she never would ask anyone she did not know personally. " Belle's Letters " in *The World*, which were the only sort of social paragraph of that day, always put in a little acid bit about the Montagu House Ball being very select and therefore rather dull, which just meant that neither she nor any of her friends were asked, so she could not describe it at all. Some people we knew used to send " Belle " presents of game and things, hoping to be mentioned—you generally knew by her remarks who was petting her up. There was an awfully nice girl who was not by any means a beauty, but she always appeared as " Among the pretty girls at Lady Somebody's ball was Lady Somebody Something." I regret to say that we always were mentioned as " among others present ! " which probably was quite a correct description of our charms ; but in any case, not having a grouse moor, or even a chicken run, I fear it would have been impossible to dazzle " Belle " with our great beauty, even had we possessed it.

Of course Lord Ormonde's daughter, Lady Beatrice

Butler (who afterwards married General Pole-Carew), was different. She never bothered to do anything to attract anybody's attention, but not even a grouse-less "Belle" could have put her among the "also rans." She was, and is, the most beautiful person, and with such a charm of manner that everybody fell in love with her at first sight, but she never got the least bit spoilt by it, and always greeted old friends with huge joy, however uninteresting or dull they might be. It was quite all right to sit out with one's partner between the dances, but not to stay on with him through the following one, and three dances were considered enough for any particular man. However, it was quite easy to catch a convenient cousin and dance round once in front of Mary and then return to the young man of the moment in the garden.

I remember once at old Lord Astor's dance in Carlton House Terrace getting an awful fright. Mary was not well that evening, and she left me in charge of a friend of hers. My best young man came rather late; we went down to the supper-tent on the terrace, leaving the ball-room full of people. It was such a lovely night that after supper we got under the flap of the tent and wandered down to the far end of the terrace, and finding a seat there became very sentimental and watched the sunrise. Suddenly I began to realize that I had not heard the band for some time, and to our horror we found that the dance had ended rather suddenly, and that we were marooned out on the terrace, even the supper-tent being in darkness and completely closed down. For a moment I was tempted to climb over the wall and escape that way, but then I remembered that our unfortunate little footman must still be waiting at the door, so luckily decided to get into the house

again somehow, which we did with great difficulty, and seeing lights on upstairs in the drawing-room, crept nervously up, to find my temporary chaperon sitting there carrying on a sleepy conversation with poor Pauline Astor, who was doing hostess, her father, Lord Astor, having given up hope and gone to bed long ago. It was a very nervous moment, and only for the fact that the old lady was thankful to be able to leave at all, I should have got a much colder reception. All the same, she must have been a sport, as she never told Mary about it.

People did not as a rule keep their carriages out to take them home from dances, but the footman was left, and he sat on the box of the four-wheeler and escorted the ladies back. To save Mary the bother of taking us home, our footman would come as well as hers, and we often felt the most awful devils to keep him out so late, and apologized most profoundly. He was a dear little boy with a pink-and-white face, whom we called "Cherry cheeks" behind his back, but I can't remember his real name. Anyhow, he never seemed to mind sitting up, and always said, "Oh no, my lady, I don't mind at all; I gain great experience at the doors"—we always wondered what kind it could be.

There were huge dinner-parties given in those days, but unless it was actually in the house where the dance was to take place, or given by some close relation of the hostess, it did not follow that all the guests would go to any particular dance. Certainly the men did not necessarily go on, as the ball-giver always asked all the men separately herself and you never took anyone with you. Dinner was very late, sometimes not till nine or nine-thirty, and dances started at eleven, but one never thought of going before half-past, so it made an awful

gap between the end of dinner and leaving for the dance, which was a bad plan, and inclined to let you get very sleepy before starting the evening's amusement.

At these dinner-parties they never kept the older people together like they do now, but all had to go exactly according to rank, so we used to find ourselves having to go in to dinner with the most dreary old lords, and any young man who happened to be a duke or a marquis was sure to have to take in the hostess, however old and fat she might be, which was very hard luck.

There used to be terrible things called "Drums," which meant an evening party, and generally were on Saturday nights, as they ended early. Nothing happened at all except a band which played dull tunes on the landing and just the usual buzz of conversation. However, at one of these the Arthur Wilsons had the brilliant idea of getting rid of all the fogies early and then turning it into a dance, and Muriel Wilson went round whispering to the chosen few not to leave, so when the godly ones had hurried off soon after eleven to make sure of getting home before the Sabbath morning started, the band came into the drawing-room and we danced merrily till 4 a.m. I must say I never have been able to understand why Sunday should have two nights.

CHAPTER XV

IN the August of 1898 Dr. Munthe arranged that we were to come out to Capri to a little house of his called Forestina, which was next to San Michele, and where he had lived while he was building the latter. He was not there himself at first, but we had the use of the garden at San Michele, and had most of our meals in the adorable little white loggia which Munthe had built at the end of the garden on the very edge of the rocks hanging over the sea—1,000 feet below—yet the water was so clear you could see the rocks and bits of coral at the bottom of the sea quite plainly. There was a dear old gardener called Pasquala, and his two daughters came to us as servants ; but as our Italian was not at all fluent and their English was non-existent, the ordering of our meals was rather a problem, so they fed us on things they liked themselves, which, at any rate, was nice for them, but we couldn't help wishing that they had larger appetites.

Dr. Munthe had left us in charge of his four dogs. There was a Great Dane called " Yolla " and a white Arctic sleigh dog. Also a poodle which even Munthe admitted was quite mad. The fourth was a fox terrier. Rosina Pasquala gave us three mixed biscuits each for tea, and the dogs would stand over us like Chicago gangsters and demand their graft, so that if we got one biscuit apiece we were lucky. There was a monkey too who was the greatest devil. It would escape on all possible occasions, and as the garden consisted of terraces with vines, all of which were thickly hung with

bunches of grapes, the monkey could sit up and eat to its heart's content quite indifferent to our pathetic appeals. If we came too near it just pelted us with a barrage of grapes and figs.

There were two bedrooms at the Forestina, both looking across the bay towards Vesuvius, and at night the red glare from the furious eruptions that were going on then would light them up as if they were on fire.

We had arranged to have some English newspapers sent out, and there were always long articles in them written by scientific old men predicting that there was going to be another "Last day of Pompeii." They said that probably it would happen quite suddenly, and that when it did the island of Capri would disappear into the sea during the night. So we "kept our eye" on Vesuvius like the "Skibbereen Eagle" did on Mr. Balfour, but luckily with more result!

Dr. Munthe was very clever at picking up furniture, but, like all collectors, lost sight of the object of furnishing a house from the point of view of comfort. I think some of the "pieces" must have dated from B.C., though he assured us that they were tenth century.

When Dr. Munthe came down to Capri he removed Rosina to cook for him, and as he was very fluent in Italian and luckily had a good appetite, we had lovely feasts with him at San Michele.

Pasquala summoned all sorts of human creatures, including ourselves and the village idiot, to pick the grapes and trample them to make the wine—it was a mercy to find employment for the latter, as while he was trampling he only made faces at us, but at other times he amused himself by climbing up on the garden wall and pelting us with fruit and large rocks. Luckily we got very nippy at dodging them. We

could never quite decide whether it was just a playful habit of his or if he did it to show his scorn for us ; at any rate he always insisted on coming with us wherever we went, so he must have been one of those who enjoyed the society of their inferiors.

It really was the most perfect place in the whole world. Wonderful weather, gorgeous views, and San Michele itself, which was too quaint and attractive for words—Dr. Munthe had built most of it himself with his own hands, just helped here and there by his adoring slaves (Pasquala & Co., who looked on him as a sort of god), in consequence of which the place seemed to have imbibed his spirit and soul. Every corner of the house and garden was completely individual and unique. He was the most delightful and amusing companion, so natural and unaffected. He told one his marvellous experiences in such a humorous and human fashion that one could see all that happened quite clearly and seemed to know the people. Of course, I was madly in love with Munthe, like everyone else, and equally, of course, he paid not the smallest attention. In fact, I think that he was so accustomed to everybody he met being crazy about him that he hardly noticed it, and thought that they always behaved like that. But his personality was so strong and he was always so busy and so full of plans and interests that it never seemed to make him conceited in the way of sitting down and letting everybody adore him. He seemed to take it for granted in a sort of impersonal way.

I used to be very much amused when I was older to hear the raging of all sorts of lovely ladies over this interesting person—the humble ones who just adored him and said so, and the bitter ones who spoke in an

off-hand way about him, trying to give the impression that though Dr. Munthe had adored them for years they didn't care twopence, and all the time I could bet my last sixpence that if he walked into the room they would become as jellified as the rest of us. You may abuse Dr. Munthe as much as you like behind his back and persuade yourself that you disapprove of him, but I defy anyone to resist his attraction when he is there. Personally, I think it's waste of time to try ; even when you stop being " in love " with him you must go on loving him all the same for his kindness and his great big heart, which goes out to all suffering people of whatever age, sex, or kind, and whom he has been able to help, cure, and comfort just by sheer strength of personality, understanding, and sympathy. My impression has always been that those people who say they are disappointed in him *are not* the ones who have needed help, for those he never failed. The disappointed ones were those who fell in love with him and wanted love in return; in which case, all I can say is, God help them, for dearly as I love Dr. Munthe, I cannot imagine a more impossible husband or lover than he would be.

When we were leaving Capri we said we were going to Rome, but Dr. Munthe said we were to stay at Naples. However, this time we really were going to assert ourselves. Skom was the ringleader in the rebellion; she said it was ridiculous, so we told him that we were undoubtedly going straight through to Rome. He smiled his wicked smile and said, " Vell—we shall see." We all started off in a great fuss from Anacapri to Capri with our luggage—Pasquala, the village idiot, and all the other inhabitants in close attendance. On to the boat we got, and in course of time landed at Naples opposite the hotel. The train for Rome did

not leave till later, so we took our luggage across and had dinner at the hotel. We began to feel rather tired, but were determined not to show it. After a bit Skom said, "I suppose we ought to be getting ready to go," but no one moved. Munthe was in great form, most amusing, and with an ominous twinkle in his eyes. Presently he jumped up saying, "Vell—better go to bed now—I took rooms for you here in case you were tired," so we meekly went to bed with grateful hearts, and the great revolution collapsed. That was the worst of Munthe, he always knew what one would be feeling like better than one did oneself. He had no illusions. When later on we did say good-bye to him, we felt like lost souls, and got ourselves into the most awful muddle.

While we were in Milan we thought of going to Monte Carlo, and some idiot told us that it was much cheaper and better to go to Monaco, and gave us the name of an hotel there which turned out to be the most filthy and revolting pot-house that anyone could possibly imagine. The other "guests" were of the shadiest kind, and at table d'hôte dinner the most awful men would chat to us and pay us compliments, as we all sat at the long table covered with a very dirty tablecloth. Some of the men drank a lot and became very boisterous and rowdy, and others of a more sinister appearance looked at us inquisitively as if wondering how much money we had on us. When we went to bed we were so frightened of being murdered that we all got into the same room, barricaded the door with some furniture, and listened, terrified, all night to the strange sounds that occurred at intervals. Sometimes a man would come lurching down the passage and fall against our door, or another, in the room next to ours,

would stagger in and start throwing his boots and everything about. Then perhaps some woman would scream and shriek as if for help, and after a bit stealthy footsteps could be heard and muttered whispers outside. Even when we dropped off to sleep, out of sheer exhaustion, Skom woke us up, as she insisted on striking matches to look at the time all through the night at intervals of about five minutes.

We were afraid that they might not take a cheque in such a low haunt and try to prevent our leaving the next morning, but mercifully they did, and in a sort of revenge on ourselves we went off to the most expensive hotel we could find in Monte Carlo, which then was the Windsor, where the food was perfectly marvellous. Having been rather starved at Forestina, and therefore got into very moderate habits in the way of eating, we fell upon our meals at Monte Carlo and over-ate ourselves enormously out of pure greed, until we had such indigestion that we all sat up in our different rooms night after night moaning in great agony—but it was worth it. We did another starving trick on the way home, as Skom had miscalculated how much money to take, and when we were in the train between Marseilles and Paris suddenly found that we had only two or three francs left—so, passionately hungry though we were, we had to watch all the people trooping by to the dining-car, while we miserably mumbled a mouldy old *brioche*, left over from some former journey.

CHAPTER XVI

AFTER spending the Christmas of '98 with Tyrone and Bertie at Curraghmore, the Roberts's were actually brave enough to invite us to Dublin again, but this time I refrained from disgracing myself, and we had a great time. Lord and Lady Cadogan were still at the Castle, and they generally gave a large dance and a small intimate one every week, the rest of the evenings being filled in by other people's entertainments. Lord and Lady Ashbourne always gave a dance. Their ball-room was lighted by candles on rather narrow brackets all round the walls, the wax from which had a way of melting and dripping down on to the unfortunate chaperons below.

Lord Ashbourne was a dear old man. He had a great brogue, and whenever he mentioned anyone would give them a sort of character. Yes, he would say, he's a good, kind, honest, respectable, high-minded, etc., etc., woman or man, as the case might be. He also had a trick of alluding to anyone who was dead as "the late" So-and-so, even if it was one's own father. I remember him saying to me, "As the late Lord Waterford once said to me, never give a present that eats." I did not quite know what the right repartee to that was, so I said, "How right he was!" and that seemed to satisfy him.

The Iveaghs used to entertain a lot, and always had huge dinner-parties before their dances, but Lady Iveagh was so kind she hated to leave anybody out, and the consequence was that there were always about

four more people than the table would hold ; we were packed like sardines, so close together that it was impossible to eat. However, luckily dinners were so long in those days that one could bargain with one's partner as to which courses he was keen about and take it in turns to eat or sit right back and let him have a turn at the food. Their balls were great fun, and always had such a go about them. Leila Crichton was the great beauty at the Dublin dances, and every young man fell in love with her. They all had to go through it—like distemper in foxhound puppies. She lived at a place called Mullaboden, not far from Dublin, and, whenever any new victim was sickening for this distemper, the word used to go round that " poor old So-and-so had got Mullaboden fever," so their friends were very tender and kind to them till they recovered.

The Dublin season always ended on St. Patrick's Day with a huge ball, to which almost anyone could come. I think they sent in their names and, if they had evening dresses and were at all presentable, they got invitations. There were several old stories about the behaviour of the guests at these St. Patrick Balls—one about a very fat little Major in tight uniform trousers and a short mess jacket who, while pushing and shoving to get to the supper-room door, managed to get in front of a fierce old lady. In a rage she plucked an ornamental pin out of her coiffure, and jabbing it into him up to the hilt exclaimed, " Ha, ha, me little buck, I'll tache ye to push ! " to which the only response was a frantic yell from her unfortunate victim.

In those days there were terrible things called " inside " cars on two wheels. The driver sat on a tiny seat in front right on top of the horse. There was a cover over the seats and flapping curtains at the back

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through which you climbed into the vehicle. It was supposed to seat four people inside, but as it was always tilted well down at the back the two outside people had to cling on like grim death, or else fall out into the road, and there really was nothing to cling on to. Lots of the Dublin people had these atrocities for driving to parties at night, and another story of that time was about the man who was announcing the carriages shouting out, "Mrs. O'Flaherty's 'inside's' coming up," which caused all the people in her vicinity to give the poor lady a wide berth, quite unnecessarily.

It is amazing to think of the appalling discomforts one bore up with long ago. Those endless drives to race meetings, etc., on outside cars—could anything be more tiring? If you were alone on your side, the only way was to sit sideways as if you were riding a horse, and even then the rug always came untucked and blew about in the breeze, leaving your legs to freeze. If two people sat on the same side, it was the limit of misery, and only sheer despair could give one strength enough to cling on, as it generally rocked from side to side on the uneven roads.

The Roberts's always had the most cheery parties, mostly of girls, as there were such a lot of soldiers quartered in Dublin that men were at a discount. Beasie and Constance Butler (our old friends of yachting days) were staying there at the same time as we were, and we used to have games of football in the wide passages leading to the A.D.C.s' rooms—Freddy Roberts was A.D.C. to his father then, and Charlie Fitzmaurice (whose sister Bertie had married my brother). Whenever Freddy and Charlie wanted to go out hunting, they used to get Aileen and Edwina Roberts and Susan and me to do their work, writing out invitations, etc., and

if Aileen and Susan went out with the hounds too, it fell to Edwina and me.

Freddy had an Aberdeen terrier called Bandy, who was a great character. If his master went off for the whole day and he felt he had been neglected, he would sulk with him when he came in and ostentatiously go over to one of us and make a frightful fuss of us. Aileen had an Aberdeen terrier, too, but unfortunately he and Bandy, after being firm friends for ages, suddenly ran into each other round the corner of the passage one evening, and they both got such a shock that they were in the middle of a death grapple before they recognized each other. After that they always fought. I think they were both too proud to admit their mistake. It was very nerve-racking having them in the house when they never could meet, and the elaborate arrangements of shutting them up in turn were unbelievable. Even the sentry outside was roped into these manoeuvres, and, but for his presence of mind, many disastrous encounters would have taken place.

One day they did meet in Lady Roberts's bedroom, and we had a battle royal. A rather vague lady who was staying at the time added to the terrors of the combat by rushing in with her jug of water and upsetting it liberally over all of us.

Lord Roberts had a most adorable old war horse called Vonolel. He was quite white with age, but most dignified. He almost took the salute himself at the St. Patrick's Day march past of the troops, but he did unbend if there were any lumps of sugar about.

Lord Roberts was the greatest little saint that ever lived, and a saint with a sense of humour, too, which is a rare thing on this earth. Most fathers of families, however nice, are rather inclined to make a little more

stiffness in the atmosphere of their homes when they are there, but with Lord Roberts everyone felt quite deserted and lonely if he was away. He was very punctual and always went in to dinner when it was announced, whether people had come down or not, which really was much better, as then nobody could feel that they had kept him waiting and ruined the dinner. They could just slip into their place without disturbing anyone. One lady of high degree who was staying there had been into Dublin one evening, and had had a great rush to get back and be dressed in time. She was inclined to be stout, and had a very tight appearance, as if her chest were securely lashed in. Rumour had it that she even went to bed in her stays, but I expect that was a calumny. However, on this occasion she came rushing down just in time, apologizing for being late, and said with great feeling to Lord Roberts, "But you know how difficult it is, to get it all in," upon which he lost his head completely and, looking at her tightly laced figure, hurriedly disclaimed any such knowledge.

Grandpapa Beaufort died on April 30th, 1899, so we went over to be with Granny at Stoke for a bit, as she was very sad. We helped her to go through all his things. Among a lot of other photographs on his writing-table was one of a woman who had been a best girl of his years before. Granny just picked it up, gave it one look, and put it head downwards into the wastepaper basket, quite calmly remarking, "My dear, such nonsense"—her only comment on the whole affair, which was so truly characteristic.

I think it was in August of '99 that we went to Abbey Leix, Queen's County, to stay with Lord and Lady de Vesci for the manœuvres. The Roberts's

were there, and a huge house-party of girls, whom Lady de Vesci had wired for when she decided to give a dance for the soldiers. It really was the greatest fun. They all came in their marching uniforms, most of them in hob-nailed boots and no gloves (which at that time were absolutely essential in any ball-room), as, of course, they were camping out and had no other kit with them. Lady de Vesci stood there receiving them as they filed in one after another, the butler saying their names, but she got absolutely dizzy in the end, and just said that as there were so many men and so few girls, we had better ask them to dance without being introduced. So we did, and I'm sure no *débutantes* ever looked so anxious and imploring as those young men did when we cast our eyes over them to see which we should pick. To add to their horror of being a wall-flower they had had no dinner, and were practically starving, and, as there was a rule that no man could go in to supper without a partner for fear of their storming the place, we were their only hope. They got very cute after a bit, and used to lie in wait outside the supper-room door, seize us as we emerged with one replete partner and plead earnestly with us to return with them. I should think I had about fifty suppers that night.

In October '99 the South African War started, and everybody spoke of it then as being a sort of skirmish that would soon be over. All the unattached young men and even soldiers in regiments that were not sent out at once rushed round bothering and worrying everybody at the War Office and using influence to get themselves sent out, if as nothing else, then as war correspondents to newspapers. They were in such a fever lest the war should be over before they got there, but when more and more bad news kept coming in, the

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depression became appalling. When we were back at our house in Ovington Square, we spent our whole time saying good-bye to all our men friends as they went off by degrees, and listening to the paper boys calling out the most ghastly disasters in the streets, half of which were purely imaginary just to sell the papers. We used to run out in an agony and buy one and then find that it was the same disaster of two or three days back that we had got wrought up over and the same pathetic little list of casualties. They stopped this calling out of news after somebody with a weak heart had died on hearing her husband's name shouted down the street when he was not dead at all, I believe.

People always talk of the South African War as being nothing compared to the Great War, but as far as I was concerned it seemed far worse. If all the men you know in the world go far away to a war, it does not make any difference to you if thousands of others are left at home. I had only been grown up for two years, and had just got to know all the young men of that day, mostly soldiers, and they all went. Somehow one's youth went too. You never could start again. It was so far away ; there was nothing one could do. Nobody ever came back, even if they were wounded or ill. They just were sent to Cape Town and remained there. All life stopped ; London was dead ; nobody gave a dance—there were no men to dance with, even if we had the heart to go to one. There was nothing except the post once a week. Of course, we didn't have any food shortage or submarines, but the sheer dreariness of it was so despairing. I picked up the paper one day and saw that one of my dearest friends was killed, and yet went on getting his letters for three weeks afterwards, letters full of life and hope.

We sold the Ovington Square house and went to live at Mayfield, near Curraghmore, that autumn. We had meant to anyhow, mostly because a man called Pitney who was a house carpenter left over as a legacy from the Charles Street days, would send in bills that ran something like this :

	£	s.	d.
To unscrewing, pulling down, levelling, smashing up pipes, re-levelling, putting up and rescrowing same	-	-	-
To tearing up boards, planing, replacing, and varnishing same.	-	-	
To pulling out, breaking up, and carting away kitchen stove, revarnishing and restoring and putting back		2	9½
To sundries	365	19	8

It just broke our spirit; we never knew what sundries might arise at any moment, and no power on earth would keep Pitney out of the house, or stop him hammering and screwing and unscrewing our possessions.

After we had got settled into Mayfield, we went up to the Roberts's to help them start the new Soldiers' and Sailors' Families Association, of which Aileen and Edwina were the organizers and heads. It was the greatest relief to be busy and feel one was doing something to help, but we came across all sorts of little tragedies. One man had apportioned practically all his pay to his wife, when some horrible former wife turned up, who had been lost for years, put in a claim for it and got it, leaving the nice little second wife, who had no knowledge of her existence, absolutely stranded. However, luckily, being the head office, we wangled an allowance for her somehow.

By this time (December '99) the disasters in South Africa had become so chronic that Queen Victoria sent for Lord Roberts, and he was actually over in London

on the 17th when the news came through of Freddy's death. He had walked over to the tape machine at his club and read it out. I never shall forget that day. We were working hard at the S. & S.F.A. in the girls' sitting-room, and Lady Roberts came in with a telegram unopened in her hand. She was just asking us if we had remembered to do something important while she opened the wire and mechanically read it out. None of us could grasp it at first. Poor old Lady Roberts went quite grey in the face and walked away as if in a dream. She sat in her bedroom just rocking to and fro, not even able to cry, and, as she had a bad heart, we were terrified lest it should kill her. The girls had completely collapsed. No one could possibly imagine how much they all adored Freddy. He just was the idol of the whole family. I remember creeping into Lady Roberts's room that evening in the half-light and sitting on a footstool at her feet. I slipped my hand into hers and started talking very softly about Freddy, speaking of little things that he had said and done, and in the end she broke down. So we cried together, and it seemed to relieve her and help a little.

The most extraordinary thing was the dog, Bandy. About the time that it must have happened, when of course we knew nothing, he became absolutely distraught, howled and howled, behaved like a mad thing, and refused to be comforted, though we did everything we could think of. He would not even eat his favourite things. Poor Freddy was a gallant man. General Buller called for volunteers to go out and save the guns at Colenso, and out he went to his certain death on that sad day. They awarded him the Victoria Cross after his death, and I believe it is one of the very few instances of a father and son both getting the V.C.

It is extraordinary how closely tragedy and comedy are entwined in this world. A few days before this terrible blow fell, Aileen, for a joke, wrote in the visitors' book in the hall, Mr. and Mrs. Balderdash, spelling it B. Alder-D'Ashe, and we told Lady Roberts that she must be kind to them and ask them to tea, so pretended to write a very cordial letter inviting them to come. I think we meant to dress up and come ourselves or something, but of course forgot all about it when the tragedy happened, until Lady Roberts said, "Oh dear, those dreadful Balderdashes are coming to tea," in a hopeless voice. Aileen just said sadly, "I'll put them off," and we were all so shattered by the shock that it seemed as if they were real people and had been coming to tea. We somehow felt that they would be sad about it, too.

Lord Roberts came back to collect his things and go off to South Africa and, as it meant the family leaving the Royal Hospital, we stayed and helped them pack up. We took their pony and trap, such a wonderful pony called "The Flipper," which Freddy had picked up at a fair. It always reared straight up in the air at starting, but when it did come down, went like the wind.

The following May (1900) Mafeking was relieved. We were in London staying at Hampden House with the Abercorns, and I never shall forget that night and how raving mad all the people went. We had gone to the opera, and on our way home the horses had to go at a very slow walk. The streets were absolutely crammed with people all singing and shouting. One man put his head in at the window of the carriage and said, "Have you heard the news? Mafeking has been relieved." He was trying to be funny. Susan answered, "Yes, isn't it nice?" which we told her sounded

very inadequate, but it defeated him, and he left us in peace. Ladysmith had been relieved on February 28th, but I don't think the excitement was nearly as great over that victory.

While we were at Mayfield we used to visit all the poor people in Portlaw. I remember going into the cottage of one old woman, and she led me over with great caution and told me that one of the ladies had left a very dangerous thing for her to look after till it was called for. She said, "I don't know if maybe 'tis a telegram." This proved to be a portable electric bell which was being returned to its owner after being lent for some illness.

Another time I saw an old woman digging away in her garden, and at the other end was her lazy old man sitting smoking a pipe. I said to her, "You tell Maloney from me that it's him should be doing the digging, not you." Next day she said, "I told the old man what you said, and he luffed very much!"

There was a darling old woman called Julia Ryan, and Susan persuaded her to wash her face, with the most disastrous results. She told us that she caught a chill, and was so ill she had to send for the priest in the night, but even so she had only washed the very middle of her face, as there was a high-water mark beginning just above her eyebrows and ending on her chin; however, she said it would be a lesson to her never to do such a thing again. She had five or six children all away in America and had not heard from them for twenty years, so did not know if they were alive or dead. Often American children would come back to Portlaw after about five years. Sometimes one would hear that a girl was ill, and be astonished, on going into some filthy little hovel of a cottage, to see

quite a smart, pretty girl dressed in a most elaborate fine nightgown lying on an awful old bed, but she didn't seem to mind.

We were very busy gardening and each took a bit. Skom was very boastful about her flower-bed, but unfortunately some evil grub got busy and only about six gaunt-looking stalks came up a yard apart, which we christened the "Hat-Pin Border." Susan and I each planted some marvellous seeds, but our near neighbours, the Morleys, had a lot of enormous dogs, and Maud Morley's bull terrier, "Tarquin" by name, took a fancy to our seed-beds, and rolled and scraped so energetically that they ceased to be. Everybody put down all their failures to "Tarquin," which was very convenient. Maud's aunt, who lived near, was told by her servants that he had climbed into the larder and taken a leg of mutton. I believe he had got up on to the top shelf of the store cupboard and taken a tin of biscuits too, so there was no doubt of his being an unusual dog!! Anyhow, the aunt sent in a long bill for all these things, which caused great mirth to Maud and to all the country-side, so for fun we made out a bill too, *à la* Pitney :

	£	s.	d.
To cost of seeds ruined by Tarquin	—	—	—
To tin kettle to tie to Tarquin's tail	—	—	—
To piece of string to tie it on with and fixing same			9½
To sundries	25	19	11

but I regret to say we never got our just dues !

We were just as tiresome about our dogs as all the neighbours were. Skom had a Dandie Dinmont called "Vic," and I a wheaten Irish terrier called "Billy." Susan's choice was a dachshund, whose name was "Mr.

Cas ” ; he was the most disobedient dog that ever was known. Susan would begin in a loving voice saying, “ Good little man—lie down,” but he just looked at her in a cocky way with his head on one side and his legs akimbo. We used to hear her adjuring him to lie down in a voice that got crosser and crosser, and at last he left off being a “ Good little man ” altogether, and she just shouted, “ Lie down,” and leant on bits of him, but his legs were stalwart though bandy, and he would not lie down. There was one terrible day when we had invited friends over to luncheon, and when we came into the room there were the two roast ducks on the floor being eaten and enjoyed by the abominable “ Mr. Cas.” If possible we always ordered something which left a bone each for our dogs, and if there was any guest staying with us they got quite nervous at the cannibalistic way we all gazed at their plate, as it was an unwritten rule that we must not ask for a guest’s bone until they had finished with it, so it became rather like the game of Snap. The first to shout out, “ Can I have your bone ? ” got it for their dog.

Skom and Susan went to the Paris Exhibition in August 1900, and I went up to stay at Barons Court with the Abercorns. There is a lake near the house, and we did a lot of sailing. One day I was in a boat with a nephew of Uncle Hamley’s called Claud Anson, and Phyllis Hamilton was in another one with her cousin Ronny Hamilton. We had a race, and to our horror a sudden squall came up and their boat capsized. We tacked and tacked to get up to them, but the wind had dropped suddenly in the most maddening way. However, at last I was able to steer close to them, and as we passed, Claud seized Phyllis and I got hold of Ronny, pulled him round to the other side, and at a given

signal we both made a great effort and hauled them in. Mary Abercorn was always rather nervous about the boats, and Phyllis was afraid she would be upset, so directly they were dry they both went into her sitting-room looking very serious. Phyllis said, "Mamma, Ronny and I have got something to tell you." Mary was frozen with horror, as she had a mania against first cousins marrying, and she thought they were going to say they were engaged, so when Phyllis went on to say that they had been nearly drowned Mary was so relieved she said, "Oh! is that all?" which was not at all what they had expected. Claud Anson and I got engaged after that, but we didn't say anything about it, as he was going off to his ranch in Texas. After he had gone I wrote a laconic post-card to Susan in Paris saying, "Am engaged to Claud Anson. Just off to the choir practice. Best love——", so she and Skom came rushing back complaining bitterly of my lack of detail.

Queen Victoria died on January 22nd, 1901, and the streets had a very gloomy appearance; every living soul was in dead black, it was most depressing. We saw the funeral from a house in Piccadilly, and I must say it was amazingly impressive. The procession went by in absolute dead silence, which somehow affected one so terribly that one could hardly bear it.

Claud and I were married at St. George's, Hanover Square, on February 27th, 1901. We got a lot of wedding presents, but the nicest one of the lot was given to me the day before we left Mayfield for good in January; a dear little old woman who had only one hen in the world brought my present up to me—it was an egg her hen had laid.

PART II

CHAPTER I

THE most tiresome part of going to live abroad undoubtedly is having to listen to the expert advice given by your friends and relations as to what clothes you will require, but in whatever direction of the world you may be going, one thing is quite certain—everybody will say to you : “ My dear, what you really will want is a good pair of strong boots.” None of my friends had ever been to Texas, but every single soul I met made the same remark. I bought high boots and medium-sized boots, boots that laced up all the way, boots that laced up a little bit in the middle ; in fact, every known kind of boot, but now I look back on my life in Texas—I do not ever remember wearing any boots at all. It was usually much too hot, and though there were families of rattlesnakes living under the house, I got so accustomed to the idea of them that I just took a chance ; anyhow, they hardly ever came out till late evening when it began to get dark.

Nobody seemed to think that I should need any other kind of clothing ; in fact, one friend of mine, who happened to see some trousseau under-garments being packed for the journey, said : “ Surely you won’t want those in Texas ? ” in rather a shocked voice.

We started off on March 20th, 1901, in one of the small boats (13,000 tons), just as the spring equinox was due. I never stopped being ill for one moment, except one day when the storm was at its height, when I was too frightened even to be sick. Our cabin was on a deck of some sort, and the porthole looked towards

the fore-part of the ship, so that when it was going down and down and down into the trough of the huge Atlantic rollers, you looked up and saw an enormous wall of dreary, grey water towering above as far as you could see ; it really did seem as if you never could rise in time to meet it or even go through it. Even the stewardess was so ill she never came to me, and as for my maid Zilpha, I never saw her at all. In those days I had masses and masses of long hair all rather fuzzy and tangly, and the state it was in when we at last got into calmer water the day before we landed was too awful to imagine. I had never been able to brush or comb it since the first night we came on board. It was knotted into a complete rope. I believe there was quite a lot of excitement over there being a " bride " on board, but when I was carried up on deck that last day no one could believe that such a pea-green creature could possibly be anything so romantic. We passed a wreck, about twelve hours out from New York, with shipwrecked mariners and all on board. Our ship stopped and a boat went off with food and water, as they signalled that they would try to make the port, now that they were under the lee of the shore, before more storms overtook them. We were twenty-four hours late, and when we did get into the dock had to wrestle with those beastly Customs. I was half carried off the ship, and sat miserably on a trunk under the letter A, feeling that my backbone had melted, and that there was practically nothing left to hold me together. The Customs man threw all our possessions about, and when he got to my side-saddle, he said severely to me : " This is a new saddle." My spirit rose enough within me to answer : " Well then, I must be very new, as my mother had it before I was born."

He took one look at me and passed it through. We stayed in New York a few days and saw flat-irons and skyscrapers and all the sights. I invariably got lost because I had no compass with me. The directions given were generally something like : " Take two blocks south and three blocks west "—which conveyed nothing to my mind.

We went on to Niagara, which is a foul spot. When you first see the Falls they are marvellous, but as nobody at Niagara ever speaks on any other subject, you get to hate the very thought of them. We saw those beastly Falls from every point of view ; we even went down and got under them, greatly against my will, particularly as I was seized and thrust into oilskin trousers without pity or appeal by a strong-minded woman who seemed to sacrifice her whole existence to forcing unwilling victims into waterproof suitings—not at all becoming, by the way. Everybody waylays you, contriving to make you pass through a sort of wooden hothouse where loud-voiced and persistent females insist on your buying photographs and moccasins. After all this Chicago seemed a very nice peaceful place. There were no gangsters in those days to interfere with the ordinary public, though there was just as much graft and corruption behind the scenes. The streets were impassable except by tram, no attempt having been made to make any road at all.

We took three days by train to get to Texas, very comfortable until we got to a place called Temple, where we changed into a long chair car, filled with local folk getting in and out at every station with all their luggage done up in parcels and baskets. Everybody seemed to have at least six children with extraordinarily few clothes on, and as these were allowed to roam about

and scramble all over one, the atmosphere became rather sticky and heated. Their various fathers and mothers regarded them with great pride and joy.

A small boy insisted on being the life and soul of the party. From about 10 p.m. till midnight he kept everyone awake by tramping in and out of the car, slamming the doors, and shouting the name of the next station. All the company present said he was a "right bright little boy" and fed him with sweets.

We passed through a lot of funny little towns and settlements, some of them with only a few little wooden huts, but even the larger places had no station. There is a huge bell on the engine which is rung as the train slows down and stops in the middle of the main street. The trains are much larger and higher than the ones we have here, and as there is no platform the porter of each car puts a little ladder down from the door at the end. The bell sounds most attractive, and as there are only about two trains a day, one going and the other coming, all the townspeople come rushing out to hear the news and see the sights, whatever time of day or night it is.

The train stopped at a small place about seven o'clock and everyone got out to have dinner. There were two rival inns, or rather wooden shanties, next door to each other, and on the fence of each sat a small boy solemnly ringing a bell to attract the hungry. The food was rather nasty, all messed up into a constellation of little plates round each place. I soon found that if I did not appreciate these delicacies my neighbours did, as their forks were continually shooting out and pronging the tit-bits off my little dishes. A man at the door charged us what he called "Two bits" as we went out. There was no need to be anxious about being left

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behind, as the guard, brakeman, engine-driver, and stoker were all among the " smart set " in the restaurant. A tremendous thunderstorm with torrents of rain came on that night, and this was at its height at 2 a.m. when we arrived at the station of San Angelo, which was at the end of the line.

The guard and brakeman on the train called Claud by his Christian name, which is a sign of popularity, but " ladies " are not included in this. In fact, however long one woman has known another, they always call each other Mrs. So-and-so, or if very intimate, " Miss Sadi," or whatever her Christian name happens to be, to show that they had known her before her marriage. Mr. Penrose N. Ions came to meet us and had hired a fly, but the rain made the track into such a slough of despond that one of our very weak-looking horses slipped up and fell down in the mud, refusing to move any farther. The whole place was lit up with the most vivid flashes of lightning. A cloud burst, hammering down on to the roof of the carriage and pouring away in a sort of river which swirled all round us ; the men had to get out to haul the horse on to his feet again. It seemed rather like the end of the world ; nothing mattered ; you just sat there and time ceased to exist. When we did get to the house we found Mrs. Ions waiting up for us in a red-flannel dressing-gown. They were the kindest and most hospitable people that ever lived, and all the time we were in Texas we could go and stay there whenever we liked. It was a dear little wooden house, and our room opened off the sitting-room with big folding doors, which had a habit of swinging open at the least convenient moments. What struck me most about the towns in Texas in those days was that they had all sorts of things which we

should have called luxuries over here, like ice, electric light, and telephones, as a matter of course, but none of the ordinary comforts of life. Claud had been out in Texas for so many years that there was quite a lot of interest taken in our arrival, and Mrs. Ions's telephone, the next day, rang from morning to night on some excuse or other, her friends generally asking casually if we had arrived, and ending up by saying that they were thinking of calling round to see her ; so I got well inspected by the neighbours. Even if we were eating a meal, Mrs. Ions always said : " Come right in," and then we all had to get up and sit round the front room making conversation till they chose to go, leaving our food to get stone cold on the table.

The ranch was twenty-five miles away from San Angelo, and the first part of the drive was very flat and uninteresting. We kept on passing all sorts of awful wooden shanties with tipsy-looking little chimneys, the sort of houses a child might draw on a piece of paper. Claud had a diabolical trick of saying, when we were approaching one of these : " Here we are, home at last," and I rose every time, saying in a weak voice : " What a dear little house ! " with despair clutching at my heart. However, after about fifteen miles we suddenly got into lovely rolling country with live-oak trees and delicious creeks bordered by the most gorgeous nut trees called " Pecans." There were great clumps of shumac and big tufts of grass. Our house was very nice and comfortable, really two houses joined together by a wooden trellis, which formed a little porch. On the right was the original rock house which we all used as a dining-room, the kitchen behind, and the rooms where the manager and his family lived built on behind that again. On the left steps up into

our sitting-room, two bedrooms off it on one side and two on the other, to the end of which Claud had added a wonderful bathroom.

This caused the greatest sensation in the whole country, people coming for miles to see it. My big bedroom he had built on beyond that at the end. Our part of the house was made of logs, the inside being panelled with oiled and stained wood. It stood high up on piles on account of the snakes.

A deep verandah all the way round made a sort of passage way except in very bad weather, and every room had to have a door out on to it, in case of fire. Both doors and windows had an inner frame of mosquito wire to keep out all the flies and unattractive insects that abounded, so that you could have them open.

We were greeted with great enthusiasm by Claud's dogs. Mr. Bouncer was a liver and white spaniel who possessed great strength of character and was full of cunning and wickedness—he ruled us all with a rod of iron. There was a pointer who flayed one alive when he wagged his tail, and had a startling habit of pitching you out of a hammock on the verandah by darting suddenly under it at the sight of a jack rabbit, catching the middle of it on his nobbly backbone. Rather a nice little fox terrier too, and any amount of weird-looking other dogs that lay about the yard. They were all furiously jealous of each other, and fought together in a confused mass on the smallest excuse. Mr. Bouncer very often started these battles, and then, when things got too hot for him, would lie doggo like an opossum, as if completely dead, with eyes tight shut, while the others seized great bits of his woolly coat and dragged him round the yard until they got tired, knowing full well that with his thick coat they

never could really get anywhere near his skin ; so when they were all exhausted he would open his eyes, get up, and come trotting in to us, wagging his tail and looking as if he had done wonderful deeds of valour. Claud had taught him to play hide-and-seek. He used to knot up a big handkerchief into a ball, show it to Bouncer, and then tell him to hide his eyes ; so Mr. Bouncer would come over to me and put his head in my lap. Then, when the ball was hidden, he would start off looking everywhere, one fat paw on the chairs and tables and his face appearing anxiously over the edge—screams and wriggles of excitement when he found the hidden treasure.

The people on the ranch didn't seem quite as enthusiastic about us as the dogs were, at least I should say about me, as of course they loved Claud, and didn't quite approve of an interloper being brought in. Mr. Petch, the manager, was a dear and so friendly, but his wife and daughters were not so sure. They were German-Americans from Fredericksburg, where there was a completely German colony, only that language being spoken or taught in the schools, so that they had had to learn American when they first came to our ranch. There was a boy called Harry of about fourteen who rode and roped wonderfully well ; the girls were about twelve and ten, and had a governess called Miss Dovey Standifer. A couple of bachelor cowboys had rooms across the yard and the married ones had houses dotted about the ranch in different directions, and as there were 30,000 acres round the house, and it was about eighteen miles in length, there was plenty of room for them.

Our address was Vigo, Tom Green County, Texas, but Vigo was not a town, as you might think, but a



THE HON CLAUD ANSON
Son of 3rd Earl of Lichfield

funny little post office on a small three-cornered bit of land that nobody had ever claimed about five miles from our house. An old pirate and his wife, called Mr. and Mrs. Pruet, had settled there and built themselves a two-roomed shack just by a ford in the river, and as the post-hack between San Angelo and Menard went by there, the man who drove it would just toss the sack of letters and parcels on to their verandah as he drove by.

Old Pruet had got caught off the Spanish Main when he was a pirate and kept in prison at Vigo in Spain for twenty years, so when he came out and settled in Texas he christened his estate Vigo, in loving memory of his sojourn there. Their house was too filthy for words : the outer room was the post office, and had little pigeon-holes with everyone's names on them for the letters that came, as lots of the ranch people who did not expect a letter would not drive over there for weeks.

In the inner room the Pruets lived. There were two bunks in the walls for beds, a table, and two chairs, and all their possessions were stuck about in heaps on the floor. They were both morphia maniacs, and the post-hack always brought out their little supply once a week with the mail. I don't think they ever ate any ordinary food ; anyhow, there was never any sign of it about the place. Sometimes they were quite intelligent and on the spot. The first time I went there with Claud Mrs. Pruet received me with a great air, as if she were the President's wife welcoming me to the American Continent, but one day when I went over by myself there was no sign of either of them, and as the post-hack had evidently not come by yet I waited in the shade. Presently a strange man rode up to wait for it too. We talked and made friends. When the mail

came and still no Pruets appeared, we went into the house and, peeping into their room, saw them both fast asleep in their bunks, evidently deep in morphia dreams, so we opened the mail bag, sorted all the letters, putting them into their proper places, and keeping our own on one side. I saw him go over and squint down at my pile of letters, evidently wondering who I was, so I did the same to his, and was much amused to see that he was the man who had sent a message to Claud and to Petch to say he intended to shoot them on sight over some row about hogs, he having stolen a lot of our young pigs and branded them with his mark, but as they returned and took sustenance from their mothers, who had our brand on, relations became a little strained.

It is always considered the correct thing in Texas to send a message to anyone you intend to shoot, as it gives the other person a chance of shooting first, and makes the whole affair more sporting. When we arrived at the ranch old Petch was going about all studded with pistols in consequence of these threats, but they never mix women up in these affairs out there, and are always civil to the wives of their enemies ; even if they hold up a ranch, they do it very politely.

Claud told me about a man called Jack Ketcham and his brother who had a ranch not far off, some years before I went to Texas. He said they were awfully nice and great friends of his. At that time there were any amount of train robberies by masked men, and when they eventually caught the robbers they turned out to be these two men. They hung them up on a tree, and when they went to examine the ranch house, found any amount of things from robberies of years back.

The poor old Pruets were not there any more when

I went out to Texas the second time. There was a very bad storm and the post-hack never got through for two weeks. It so happened that they had almost run out of their dope just before the storm came on, so being left without it all that time they collapsed, and when the mail did get through again they were both found dead in their bunks.

After that they changed the mail route, and luckily it came through our ranch—within 200 yards of the house. We put up a covered letter box with a hole in the side on a post just high enough for the man to poke in our letters. Someone who had got a lady spaniel had married her to Mr. Bouncer, and when we got back there they sent over a baby Bouncer to us as a gift. I never shall forget going up one day after the mail had passed and finding this villainous-looking puppy sitting up loose in the post-box chewing away at all our letters. It really was the sweetest thing, but Bouncer looked at it with much disapproval, and when it took the haughty Mr. B. for its mother and hunted about for a little necessary sustenance, his face of furious disgust was as good as a play. Bouncer was a natural bachelor—he had no use for babies.

Nearly all the ranches round were about thirty miles away, but there was one which dovetailed into ours, belonging to a charming Scotchman called Mr. Keith. When he had a lonely fit he would come over, and we often got back from a day's drive (looking at cattle-fences, springs, windmills, etc.) to find him established in the sitting-room and playing our big musical box to himself. Unfortunately for him his ranch was right on the main track between two towns, so everybody who travelled along that way went in, fed, and stayed the night—sometimes as many as eight or ten—often

people he did not know. When we went over to lunch with him we never knew whether whole families would turn up and join us or not. Of course, it is the custom of the country to put up anyone who comes along, but luckily we were a bit off the beaten track, and also the rougher people shy off coming if you have a carpet in your sitting-room instead of sand on the floor, as they can't spit where they like. If anyone of that sort came to us he slept in one of the cowboys' rooms and fed with the Petch family. There is a great feeling in Texas about eating all together, unless they are negroes or Mexicans. Claud was rather crafty about this. When the Petchs came, their family were very young, so he made the excuse that he hated children.

As a rule the ranch people have no white "help," but some have a Mexican and his wife living half a mile away who come up morning and evening to wash up. Mexicans are so treacherous, and there are lots of stories of people being murdered by them for their money. While we were out there there was a lonely old man who was killed and hidden under a haystack by a Mexican who had lived with him for years and years and been treated by him like a son.

Some people have a couple of negroes to do the cooking, but I should have been terrified of having them on our ranch. I did get one awful fright from a black man. We were staying at a bachelor ranch sixty miles away to look at some bulls that Claud was buying. It was a very tiring drive with only one pair of horses. Just fancy in England taking a pair of horses straight off the grass and driving sixty miles in one day. But the grass out there is very dry and tufty. It seems to keep all the animals in wonderful condition: even the cattle have coats that shine as if they had been

groomed. You drive straight across country most of the time, bumping over huge boulders, scraping over low bushes, and fording stony creeks.

This time we had the big Concho River to cross, which is frightfully dangerous, as however fine and clear the sky may look, you never know if there has not been a cloud-burst miles away up the river, in which case it comes down in a solid wall of water about six or eight feet high without any warning, and sweeps you away before you can look round. Claud told me that he once got to that ford by himself and found the river too flooded to cross, so he camped on the bank for the night. While he was eating his supper a lunatic turned up and made signs that he was starving, so they shared the food, and both lay down to sleep. The next morning some warders turned up and took the lunatic back to the asylum. The country on the other side of the river was real prairie, absolutely flat and without a tree in sight—most desolate. The house we went to was square, just four rooms with doors opening out on to the verandah, and the maid-of-all-work, who cooked the dinner and then rushed in and hurled it on to the table, was a large black man called Charlie. Our host told us that Charlie was in rather a nervous state, as he was wanted by the police for murdering a friend of his, and that the Sheriff might come for him at any moment. The next day all the men went out and left me alone on the ranch. At first I sat on the verandah, but after a little I suddenly heard the most blood-curdling shrieks coming from the kitchen, and the whole house shook with a sort of war dance Charlie was performing there. Remembering his little failing, I made sure that he was working himself up into a frenzy over some new victim, and in case it should turn out to be me, I fled to my

room, barricaded the doors and windows, and sat on a chair in the middle trying to keep my eyes all round my head, so that he could not spring on me from behind.

As long as he was making these unearthly sounds I at least knew where he was, but when there came a deathly silence I felt that he was creeping round intent on finishing me off. Luckily I had a few biscuits over from the day before, as I didn't dare come out to get my lunch, but towards the evening, when I saw a few cowboys about in the yard, I crept out of my fortress and thought I would get away from the house for a bit. However, I had no luck, as by that time about half a dozen enormous bulls were wandering round bellowing—some of them even leaning their noses on the rail of the verandah and breathing deeply at me.

I got no sympathy from the men at all, as they said that it was only when Charlie felt lonely that he danced breakdowns in the kitchen, and that he sang his little song to keep the ghost of his dead friend from coming back to boo at him, so if I had only been more sociable and friendly it would have been a great comfort to him ! As to the bulls, it seemed that they were great pets and, like Charlie, only yearning for sympathy.

We had one adventure on our way home : while we were crossing a very rocky creek we stopped and let the horses drink. When they put their heads down with a jerk one of the reins broke, and we were left absolutely helpless. Claud managed to crawl out along the pole between the two horses without frightening them or starting them off. He mended the rein with string and got back before they had finished their drink, but it was most agonizing, as the far bank was covered with boulders and there was a most intricate path to guide them up, so that if they had started while he was on

the pole he would probably have been thrown off and run over, anyhow.

We used to go into San Angelo occasionally to stay with the Ions family. Sometimes they were out when we arrived, so we just walked into the house, looked to see if there was any sign of our room being occupied and, if not, spread out our things and settled down on the verandah till they returned. Mr. Ions had locomotor ataxy, and was the pluckiest man I have ever met. His arms and legs would shoot out in all directions, and he fell about, but he never gave in. It made him furious if anyone tried to help him. Mrs. Ions and I sometimes talked the greatest nonsense together when he was falling about the room, as we did not dare stop our conversation or notice. Everybody in Angelo seemed to be a law unto themselves as regards the time they had their meals. At the Ions' we had breakfast at eleven, and then nothing more till dinner at five-thirty or six, with soup, meat, tea, and cakes. They had a cold supper at ten. Every fruit there seems to be called "berries"—strawberries or blackberries, etc. I was considered quite odd, because I brought my saucer of berries and cream along with me to the front room and ate them there the fourth time we were interrupted in our meal by visitors.

Mrs. Ions and I went driving round after dinner, and most of the people we went to see were having their dinner then. Another couple we stayed with had breakfast at eight, a cold lunch at twelve, and the last meal of the day, called "tea," at six-thirty, with tea, cakes, and bits of fried meat or chicken. There was only one family who had real tea—at about three o'clock—just cups of China tea and a saucer of biscuits handed round.

CHAPTER II

DRIVING up sixty miles to another ranch belonging to Mr. and Mrs. McCall, we started rather later than we meant to, and got benighted and completely lost on the prairie, which is the most hopeless and miserable thing I have ever endured. It was always rather difficult to find one's way in Texas, as there were no definite roads, but if you knew the direction and how the fences lay, you could generally hit off the gate, and from there get a track of sorts up to the house. This time the outer fence and the gate had been altered to take in another bit of ground, so we drove on and on along the fence in the gathering darkness, wondering what had become of the McCalls' ranch. In the end it was so dark we could not see the horses, so bumped miserably over huge stones and stumps of trees until we came to a very deep-looking creek, but there was no sign of the place being used as a ford. We took a chance and went crash down into the water, which nearly covered the horses and poured over our feet. When we got across it all looked so strange that Claud was sure we had come too far, and back we went again with a crash, the horses slipping and scrambling up the steep bank on the other side, along that beastly fence, until we decided that the only thing to do was to sleep out on the ground. Suddenly we saw a light, so we just broke the fence down and made for it, not caring whose it might be. By that time I was feeling very ill, so crawled into bed, not being able to face the supper of tinned kippered herrings which Mrs. McCall offered me.

The house was not very comfortable, as they had only run it up to establish a claim on that bit of land, over which they were having a law-suit. The roof was not ceiled, and you could see out through the cracks in the plank walls where the knots in the wood came. We had had a very bad drought up to then, but, of course, there must needs be a big rain that night, making several pools about on the floor, and one on the foot of the bed. Everybody else was so thrilled about the rain coming at all that they wouldn't have minded if we had had to swim round the room, but I felt I could have done without it just then. Nobody in Texas thinks or talks on any other subject but rain, and even when a heavy shower does occasionally come, it is not considered any use unless it is a "gully washer."

The next morning I really was very ill, and to add to everything, news came by a galloping horseman that Mrs. McCall's sister was dying, and off she and her husband had to go—eighty miles away—leaving us and their six little girls all alone on the ranch. When some friends of the McCalls turned up two days later to see after the children, I persuaded Claud to drive me home. Certainly it was a nightmare drive, as I had a high temperature, and was all weak and wobbly. It seemed like a thousand years. I smiled dizzily at Zilpha when we got home, and kept on saying, "It's all right," but she put me firmly to bed with a horrified face and no answering grins. I was very ill for a long time, and as it was 92° in the shade with a terribly dry, hot wind, the days were positive torture. All my hair came out, and not being able to eat anything, I got so thin that I looked like a sort of horrid boggy. Zilpha was too wonderfully good and kind, and but for her care I never would have survived. When I got better I lay

out in the hammock on the verandah, and all the neighbours came to call. I used to shut my eyes and lie doggo like Mr. Bouncer, hoping they would not see me and would go and visit Mrs. Petch, but they always spotted me at once and drove up alongside, asking me if "Mrs. Anson" was at home. I was so weak I could not walk, and yet I felt it was not the correct thing to go on lying there, especially as there were no chairs for them to sit on. My costume was also rather sketchy—a nightgown and dressing-gown, no shoes or stockings, and my few remaining hairs brushed back into a plait.

The visiting party generally consisted of the man and his wife, two or three children, a baby in arms, the man's mother, and the lady help, if any. They all talked a lot, and it is surprising how buzzy in the head one gets on these occasions. I had lain absolutely still for weeks and weeks without seeing a soul when the first party arrived. Zilpha came and rescued me, taking them into the sitting-room and collecting food for them, they having come thirty miles to visit me.

As a rule, people stay the night when they come, but they told me long afterwards, when I got to know them well, that they had heard that in England a first call was very formal, and not to last long, so they thought two hours, just long enough to rest the horses, would be correct, but when they saw me looking so ghastly, they realized that I was ill, and tactfully spent the second hour with Mrs. Petch.

This was doubly tactful, as there was a good deal of feeling in the Petch family over visitors coming to see me where, before my arrival, the ladies always paid their call on Mrs. Petch, while the husbands sat and talked to Claud. In Texas it was thought quite right for girls and young men to go buggy-riding together, but for a

married woman of any age to walk with or talk much to any man was considered quite extraordinary. If husbands were jealous they thought nothing of shooting up their rival, and got praise instead of blame for doing so. By Texas law, if a man runs away with another man's wife he gets two years' imprisonment. I think that was why the author O'Henry was in prison when he wrote most of his stories. Like every other excellent arrangement, all this being made moral by law or by force has its weak points, as the nice men who were good to their wives got frightfully henpecked, and sat on by them, and the bad men who were brutes to their wives were protected by their pistols and by the law.

I do not know if the Texas people go in for divorce now, but it was quite unknown when I was there. Every State in the U.S.A. has its own little Parliament and continually makes laws which, as a rule, nobody pays any attention to.

While we were out there they passed a law forbidding anyone to play cards on Sundays, but as the great bulk of the population lived on ranches miles away from anywhere, I don't know how they meant to enforce it. In any case, nobody on a ranch ever knew what day of the week it was, or did anything different on Sunday if he did know. Several times when we drove in to Angelo we were astonished to find that it was a Sunday when we arrived there.

There were a few small ranches within a range of about twelve or fifteen miles at the side of ours, and though everybody in Texas is very busy about being equal, and there are supposed to be no class distinctions, yet I gathered that these ranch folk were not looked on as being quite of the *haut monde*. Returning a call at one of these, we found a monstrous but very kittenish

lady staying there. She gave herself great airs, as she had been to Europe. They told us that she was very anxious to meet us, as she thought we would probably have some mutual acquaintances over there. It seemed that she had been to Germany and had there met an English lady. By that time we had all got worked up to a great pitch of excitement, and when she added that this lady's name was Miss Smith, and that she lived near London, we were all aghast at the amazing coincidence, and I hurriedly said that I knew her intimately.

The heat was awful that summer, and we had a plague of locusts to add to everything else. They ate every blade of grass, every leaf even on the tallest trees. After they had passed the place seemed just like winter. As we drove along, the locusts jumping out of the way looked like spray from a shallow stream, and in spite of this every turn of the wheels would crush thousands, making the track so slippery that the buggy skidded about all over the place. The chickens were the only things that really enjoyed the plague; they raced after them all day long, gulping down dozens until they nearly burst.

A locust is like a huge grasshopper, and looks as if he were made out of wood, with big bulgy eyes which he fixes upon you, sitting there as if trying to mesmerize you for perhaps half an hour before he jumps, and then as likely as not jumping straight into your face, giving you a bruise and a frightful shock. He doesn't seem to know himself which way he will jump. It got on my nerves dreadfully, just like waiting for a pistol to go off.

I liked the native Americans far away the best of all the people we met out there, both on ranches and in the towns. Next to them the Scotch, who never seem to

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lose their heads. Most of them were the sons and daughters of small farmers on big estates in Scotland who had come out to make their fortunes ranching or in business when they were quite young. They were well educated, extraordinarily adaptable and never vulgar, natural and friendly. There were not many English, except a few very nice young men having a look round by themselves prospecting, or sent by their people for their healths' sake, as Texas air was supposed to be very good for any lung trouble, being so dry.

There used to be marvellous Methodist Revival Meetings in San Angelo, always during the hottest weather. We went to one when it was 99° in the shade, and it really was very funny. The preacher evidently did very well on it, and made huge collections, which must have tried the patience of the local parsons very much, they living in a state of great penury on small sums doled out to them rather grudgingly by their congregations, and being very humble and sat upon. The great idea of the Revivalist was to make himself out to have been as bad and as wicked as possible before he was saved, and he told us the most bloodcurdling tales of his sins, which I'm sure he invented as he went along. He certainly looked like a fat and grumpy commercial traveller whose greatest crime was probably to overeat himself and be fussy about his food ; but everybody at the meetings worked themselves up into the most hysterical state, partly owing to the great heat, I expect. Anyhow, they sprang up, wept bitterly, foamed at the mouth, and some of them went raving mad, and confessed all their sins in loud sing-song voices. I couldn't help thinking how bored they would be when their neighbours twitted them afterwards with their shortcomings. Rather like one's relations do after one

has confided in them in a weak moment, " Well, you know, my dear, you told me yourself," etc., etc.

Everybody filed out past the preacher at the end, and he said graciously, " I am not proud, though I am one of the elect. I will shake hands with every one of you sinners." Which was very kind of him, of course. We heard of him afterwards at several other places. They begged him to pray for rain in one district where there had been a terrible drought. So he said he would if they collected £50, which they did. When they were presenting this to him at the last meeting he told them that the rain would come in three weeks' time, but that there would be a dreadful wind-storm at the same time, and that one of their society belles would die suddenly (this annoyed the local beauties very much, and they wished they had not subscribed). After that the Revivalist left for Canada, which was as far away as he could get. The people waited patiently for a month and then they gave up hope, and seeing in the paper at what town he was Reviving in Canada at that moment, they sent him a telegram saying, " No storm, no death, no rain. What the hell shall we do ? " But they never got an answer either from him or from the heavens.

Claud gave me a pair of ponies and a surrey, which is a four-wheeled carriage with four seats all looking face to the horses, and has an awning overhead. So I was able to drive round everywhere by myself, and got rather cute about finding my way. One of our cow-boys called Gus Lock was engaged to be married to the Petchs' governess, and a couple of days before the wedding he came in and told us that he wished us to attend. At the same time he asked us whether we would drive the buggy or the surrey into the town. We said we would consider the matter, but he was very

firm about our making up our minds, as he wanted whichever one we were not using to bring his wife home to the new house he had built about four miles from ours. So we had the surrey and he took the buggy.

They were married in the Primitive Methodists' Meeting-house, not because they belonged to that denomination, but they said they had looked round all the other churches and found that the Marriage Service was shorter in this one. Certainly it was short. They walked in arm-in-arm and up on to a raised platform, stood there looking towards the congregation, while the Minister stood in front of them with his back to us. They answered the usual questions, put the ring on, and walked out. It was at nine o'clock in the evening, and they had some sort of a supper party at the house of relations, but we were not asked to that.

Rather a frightening thing happened soon after the wedding. We had driven over to stay with some very nice Scotch people, and, as usual, not having announced our visit beforehand, trusted to luck that they would be there. When we drove up it was just getting dark, and the place looked absolutely deserted—not a sign of life anywhere—when suddenly out of the dead silence arose the most awful shrieks, and every now and then we heard a stifled voice calling "Help—help," then more terrible screams.

We knew that these people employed some Mexicans on their ranch, and we were sure that they were being murdered. There was dead silence again, so we plucked up courage and crept round the outside of the house, looking in at all the windows, but we saw nothing, so managed to open one and get inside, searching all the rooms in the half-light for the corpses

of our friends. Suddenly the shrieks started again. This time they came from outside, we thought, so we ran out, and sitting up in a tree was a horrible old parrot. Even though we knew what it was, it gave me the creeps each time he did it while we were unpacking. Mercifully our host and hostess appeared after a bit and brought the parrot in, so he hopped round on the floor all the time we were having supper and pecked at our ankles—which is not my idea of comfort.

None of the women out in Texas ever seem to ride ; in fact, they never venture out at all except to hang up the washing. When I was there they dressed in long cotton wrappers—a sort of dressing-gown.

Nobody ever goes for a walk either ; they looked on me as being raving mad. However, I thought I had gone mad myself one day when Claud had put seventy-five bulls into the pasture I always walked in, without telling me about it. I had got well into the middle of them before discovering his base deed. It really was an extraordinary sensation to be loose in a field with them all bellowing round me. All the same, I am not sure that seventy-five bulls are as alarming as one bull—at least they fight with each other, whereas a lonely one has more time to concentrate its mind upon you.

CHAPTER III

ONE often speaks of hurricanes over here—but after experiencing a wind-storm in America they would seem to be child's play. I was lying out in the hammock one evening in absolute stillness. Not a sound or a breath of wind, and suffocatingly hot, when in the distance there was a faint sound of rumbling. I thought it was thunder at first, but as it came nearer it sounded more like the roaring of angry cattle—thousands and thousands of them stampeding across the prairie ; as I looked anxiously in the direction of the noise I suddenly saw the trees on the horizon caught, bent backwards and forwards and then torn up by the roots and shot away as if a giant were throwing things out of his path in a fury. I was still lying in deathly stillness, and it was the most extraordinary sensation to see this intangible thing advancing towards one and pass by about 100 yards from the house, leaving an exact avenue which it had cleared for itself, and all around on both sides trees and things lying where they were thrown. Luckily it did not go through the house, as I believe it would have cut it completely in half, removing the portion it passed over to a mile or more away—quite uninjured and the right side up.

Mrs. Ions told me that she was in her kitchen once and a wind-storm picked up her whole house and popped it down on a vacant lot at the edge of the town, so they had to put it on to rollers and pull it back to its place with horses harnessed to it. She fell, and the small things were all lying about on the floor, but the furni-

ture did not move much, and the fire was still burning in the stove. No wonder people build storm-houses, which are little dug-outs, having just a trap-door at the top to get through. They always keep water and biscuits down in these places, and all the family rush there at the first sound of the storm. Sometimes, when they come up again, their home has completely disappeared ; of course, being made of wood and having no foundations, these are easily lifted up, but they are really safer than rock houses which collapse, burying everybody beneath them. I never was out in a really bad hail-storm, but Claud told me that if you are caught in one, the best thing is to get off your horse, lie down on the ground, and put the saddle over your head and shoulders, as the hailstones are as big as eggs, and come with such force that they would fracture your skull quite easily.

It got so very hot in July that we decided to go to Mexico City, which is 8,000 feet up in the mountains, and the most perfect climate, the same all the year round ; even in the rainy season it just rains for two hours every afternoon—from two to four o'clock—so if you order your carriage at five minutes past four you know it will be quite fine again.

We stayed with various people on the way—the Ions were away, so we went to the Guthries in San Angelo. They had a two-storey house which was looked upon as rather a smart thing to have in Texas. The heat was awful in the town, and as Mr. Guthrie and Claud were “ down town ” all day, we shut the doors, pulled down the blinds, and paddled about with bare feet and very few clothes on. There was a negro hired girl, but we had to do all the cooking, because she said she could not go near the stove as it might injure her complexion !

However, she answered the door when someone knocked, and came and told Mrs. Guthrie that a gentleman wished to speak to her. He turned out to be a nigger with a message, but when we asked her why she hadn't said that he was a coloured man, she answered that she was afraid it might hurt his feelings. Rather tragic in a way that they should mind so dreadfully about being black. One negro called "Crow" was working at our ranch once and got gored by a bull. He was so thrilled to find that his inside was red and white that he could hardly bear to let them sew him up. All the same, they have their own pride, and look down with tremendous scorn on really low-class whites—"Poor white trash" they call them.

The distances that one travels in America can be realized by the fact that it took us three days and three nights to get to Mexico City from West Texas, which is next door to Mexico. We went to Coleman and on from there to the Junction to wait for the San Antonio Express. The station was crowded with people, and the floor of the waiting-room crawling with cockroaches and half-naked babies—the latter very tired and sticky. I asked one man to stamp on a cockroach which kept making short rushes at me, but all he said was, "Why, them's pets in these parts."

San Antonio is very attractive and quite Spanish looking. We were there only a couple of hours, and then went on through the desolate plains of Southern Texas, stopping for lunch at a deplorable spot called Catuca—which consisted of two houses, one of which was marked "Hotel." There was only one room, divided by screens into three parts—one was the dining-room, one the kitchen, and one a cloakroom for the ladies. There was a pitcher and basin for us to wash in, which

we took in turns to do. Presently a small boy came and took our pitcher of water away. I looked to see what he wanted it for, and saw him pouring the water on to some tea leaves in a jug, this being produced as " cold tea " for us to drink with our lunch. As several people had dropped the soap into the pitcher and others had dipped a towel in to scrub their dusty faces with, I thought I would not drink any. There was some hot black coffee ; several people asked for milk, but the innkeeper said that the cows had not " come up " that morning. Considering that one could see for about fifty miles in every direction, and that there was no sign of living thing or blade of grass, we could well believe it, the food being rather on the same plan. We paid our two " bits " and went back thankfully to our store of biscuits in the train.

The border town is called Laredo. All that part of Southern Texas and Northern Mexico is below the level of the sea, and nothing will grow except prickly pears and cactus—just a dreary waste of sand and dust, and the heat—too frightful. The dust is so fine it gets right through your clothes, and your skin becomes absolutely coal-black underneath. When we began to get to the more hilly country in Mexico there were a few villages and some stunted-looking half-starved cattle, odd goat-like sheep, and people riding on top of huge packs on donkeys ; also a few ox-carts with marvellously solid-looking wheels. The country people are of almost pure Aztec blood in this part, and very primitive and wild.

The wayside restaurants where the train stopped were even worse than Catuca, the dirt and smells being beyond belief, and the food a greasy mess of chopped-up horrors.

As we got right up into the mountains the scenery became too magnificent for words, and Mexico City itself is the most heavenly place you could imagine. It is right in the centre of a sort of basin in the hills. There is only one little pass in the mountains through which the train creeps at sunrise, and there lies the Garden of Eden before you—so green and fertile. We passed through large plantations of what looked like aloes—which really are the pulque plant. We could see lots of men going round with pig-skins, making a small hole in the centre of the plant, and then sucking the white milky-looking stuff up into the skin. All the Mexicans drink this stuff in the wineshops. It is very fiery, and makes them mad drunk for a short time. Pulque keeps for about twenty-four hours, so special trains come into the City every night with a large supply for the next day. The City itself is amazingly picturesque—very Spanish, with streets of large flat-roofed palaces, each having huge carved doorways through which one peeps into lovely gardens full of gloriously coloured flowers. Everything is fresh and green, and in whatever direction you look the street ends with a green hill and blue mountains beyond.

The smart people seem to drive up and down in state all the evening along the road to Chapultepec—where the Citadel is. The President lives there, and it is very finely situated on the top of a huge rock. We hired a carriage and drove round a few days after we arrived, but the coachman behaved very oddly—he would keep driving over all the heaps of stones at the side of the road and try to bump us into the other carriages. In the end he got down off the box and behaved very rudely indeed, so when we got home Claud would not give him a tip. The man was furious

and lay in wait for him when he went out again, followed him down into a native street, and gave him in charge, two tiny policemen each seizing an arm. Claud tried to shake them off, but they clung on like limpets. Of course, he couldn't speak the language, so he was being dragged off to prison when luckily they passed the Jockey Club, of which Claud had been made an honorary member. It is the fashion in the City for the men to sit smoking in the doorways, and by good luck the Governor of the City—a man called Escandon—saw Claud as he was hauled past the doorway and came out to his rescue. We were told afterwards that nearly every foreigner gets arrested when he first comes to the City, if he doesn't know the language. Apparently they just throw the prisoner into a dungeon with about 100 others, who are mostly native murderers, and they have faction fights amongst themselves with nails which they pull out of the walls. Nobody bothers about trying these prisoners, they just forget all about them, so unless somebody misses the tourist and rushes round to the Consul to make a fuss he might be there for months.

The Jockey Club was too lovely—the whole outside being covered with huge blue-and-white tiles edged with carved stone. Claud said the inside was very fine too. The rich Mexicans gamble there all night and lose hundreds, so as the Club always takes the bank at the tables, it is frightfully rich. All the smart people declare that they are Spanish, and get furious if they are called Mexicans. A few of the younger men played polo, and these took a certain amount of hospitality from American and English residents, but they never returned it—nobody but the family and immediate relatives ever went inside their houses—probably

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because these were very inconveniently built without passages, so the guests would have to go through half a dozen bedrooms before they got to the dining-room. The ladies of the family seemed to spend their lives lying about in their dressing-gowns, and were treated almost like Eastern women. They hardly ever appeared in public except at a bullfight, or in church, driving to either of these in a brougham with tightly shut-up windows, therefore soon becoming very fat and flabby through lack of exercise. The girls sit looking out of heavily barred windows trying to pretend that they don't notice the youth who twangs his guitar on the other side of the street—apparently this is a recognized stage of courting, and when he has twanged till he can twang no more, he gets hold of his pet priest and sends him to call on the parents to arrange the match and the dowry. If all goes well they are married without ever having spoken to each other, and then she retires from the world, has dozens of babies, and dresses for the rest of her life in a cotton dressing-gown.

They do not seem to go away, even on a visit, and as for going abroad, such a thing never occurs to them. Quite a lot of the leading men of the city come over to London or Paris every year, but they would never bring their wives. The Mexicans of all classes seem to prefer English people to Americans. I fancy it is because they always have a feeling that one day America will bag Mexico like she did Texas, which used to belong to them in olden days. The Government of that time encouraged pioneer Americans to settle in Texas so as to get the land settled up a bit more, and in the end the settlers got bored with Mexican laws and just rose up and drove them out. For a time Texas became a republic of its own, but after a bit they joined

the Union so as to get the protection of the other States at their back.

The poor people in the City are rather pathetic. They are mostly original Aztec, with just a dash of Spanish thrown in, and it's not a good combination. They wear huge straw hats, white cotton shorts, and shirts with an Indian blanket either thrown over one shoulder or arranged down the front and back, with their heads put through a hole in the middle. This blanket is the only bedclothes they have at all, so if it gets wet in the daytime and they put it round them at night they get pneumonia and die like flies. I never saw anything like the callous disregard of human life that there is in Mexico—nobody cares a pin. They have two days a week for funerals—Sunday and Thursday. On those days dozens of coffins go galloping by on trolleys with a funny little cock-eyed iron cross on each. These run on the tram-lines dragged by shambling mules. They dig a large pit, and all the coffins are thrown together into the one grave, which is filled in that night, a new one being dug for the next funeral day. The natives murder each other on the smallest provocation, and nobody enquires about it, or makes the smallest effort to find out who did it. If you come in late you are quite likely to tumble over a corpse on your doorstep, though nobody in the house had heard a sound, and it would not be safe for any man to go by himself at night through the native streets or across the lonely garden-park in the middle of the City. These gardens were delicious in the daytime—palms and tropical flowers growing with lots of fresh green and little fountains ; a band playing there every day ; lots of children romping about, the tiny white babies being nursed by native women—which I can't help feeling is a bad plan.

I found the greatest difficulty in walking—my feet felt like lumps of lead, and I could not get them off the ground, so shuffled along like an old tramp. I thought that old age was creeping on apace, until someone said it was the high altitude. There were no carts about the streets. All the natives carried the most enormous loads, though they looked so weak and small—huge crates of baskets with fruit, etc., on their heads—a whole sheep, or half an ox carelessly thrown over their shoulders—generally followed by several dogs chewing any bits they could reach. The food was terrible, except in the private houses of English residents.

The Philips family had a lovely house, and they were so good to us we got awfully greedy, and positively fawned on them for a meal. Most of the residents were either diplomatic or had big businesses which their families had had for generations, but there were one or two decayed gentlemen who found it convenient to live in Mexico on account of there being no extradition treaty in that country. Everybody knew about their "trouble," but were very nice to them all the same. One old man called Crewe-Reid, who had been quite well known in London among racing people, was delighted to be able to talk of all his old friends to us, to hear news of younger generations. The first day he called I was making some tea with my spirit lamp, and he was crazy with joy to have some after all those years. It was impossible to get any tea in Mexico, but I had brought a little store with me.

After that he made some excuse or other to come at four every afternoon, hoping to be given a cup. I think he managed to sell a racehorse of his to several different people, and then wisely left England in great haste, and let them settle their claims between them.

I meant to talk to some of the people he mentioned about him when I came home, but I expect they would not have been so keen on him—poor old boy—as he was about them. I always wondered if he knew them all quite as well as he said he did, noticing that he seemed to know them even more intimately when I said that I had not met them—particularly the smart ones.

The dogs in this city are the laziest things imaginable. They lie about everywhere in the streets, and do not seem to belong to anyone in particular, but everyone is kind to them—nothing will induce a Mexican dog to get out of the way ; even if they are run over they don't move ; a sort of bored expression comes over their face as if they were saying to themselves : “ Bother, there's another bone broken,” and then they go to sleep again. When the sun goes down they get up and hobble off on whatever legs are left, dragging any broken bits after them in a most distressing fashion. The streets are absolutely full of cripples, who take the greatest pride and delight in their infirmities, showing them off to the passers-by, and making a good living that way.

We got to know a good many people while we were in Mexico—mostly diplomats. Baron Moncheur, who afterwards became the Belgian Ambassador in London, was Minister there at that time, and his wife was then Miss Charlotte Clayton, daughter of the American Ambassador. I used to chaperon her and her sister, Kathleen, who married an English diplomat, Mr. Grant Duff, some years later. I think it was twenty years before I met Charlotte Moncheur again in London. The Russian Minister was very musical, and gave a dinner for us. I was the only woman, but there was

almost every nation represented—Italian, American, Belgian, German, Mexican, and Spanish. After dinner was over I thought I ought to leave them to their wine and cigars, but they were all so polite they came too. Manners in Mexico are really rather overdone. Claud said that whenever anyone came in or went out of any room at the Jockey Club all the members sprang to their feet and bowed low, whether they knew him or not, and he had to stop and bow back again.

We went to a couple of plays. One was acted by an Italian Touring Company, and they raved up and down the stage in the most desperate way, waving a letter, calling out “ Mio Madre ” and “ Mio Padre ”—their voices choked with sobs and tears pouring down their cheeks. We were not very good at understanding Italian, but we realized that something frightful had happened to the mother and father, so became completely out of our depth when these two appeared in perfect health in the next act, and rather lost interest in the family after that, feeling that our sympathy had been wasted.

The other play was a native one, in a filthy little theatre that absolutely stank. We had a box, the stalls being a sort of pit, and costing a few pence. The people in them were ruthlessly turned out after each little play or act, and had to pay to come in again if they wanted to see any more. The plays were in Mexican, but I gathered all I wanted from the actions of the actors—in fact, even more than was necessary.

The roads were perfectly awful. One continually got stuck in the mud going out to dinner on the edge of the town, and had to wade the rest of the way on foot. One night when we were leaving after a dinner-party at the Philips's we graciously offered lifts to everyone,

as there was only one cab there. Afterwards we discovered that it was not ours at all, as we passed the one we had hired still stuck in the mud where we had left it on the way there. However, nobody minded, and each time we got stuck we all got out and helped to haul it out. I did not go to a bullfight, but Claud went and came home furious, saying that the bulls were such poor depressed-looking things and had no chance—he wished they would kill the men.

Everything in Mexico is terribly cruel, and there is no attempt at justice. If anyone has a spite against his neighbour they accuse the wretched man of some slight crime ; so without any proof they are just cast into prison and herded together—men, women, and children—into underground dungeons with hardly any air, light, or food. There is a sort of water trough from which they drink. The warders come down once a day and throw a few loaves of bread in, for which they all fight. Lots of the weaker ones die of starvation or get killed in the fights, but the warders ask no questions, and just take the bodies away. Sometimes all the prisoners combine to attack the warders for a change. About twice a year all the able-bodied convicts are collected and enlisted in a regiment, which is entirely composed of prisoners. We often saw these marching through the City, but as they have to have a company of ordinary soldiers on each side of them to prevent them escaping, I doubt their being very useful.

President Diaz was in power when we were there. We saw him at the opera one night, and he was pure Indian—almost black—but had quite a pretty white wife. He was a clever man, and the only one who knew how to rule that savage country. One of the things he did which was a great success was to issue a

proclamation that any outlaws and highway robbers who liked to come in before a certain date would be forgiven and enlisted into a sort of police force to look after the district they had been plundering. They were given a lovely uniform, a gun, and a horse; called *Rurales*, and became very important and respectable. Before Diaz came into power there were revolutions in Mexico about once a month, but he managed to keep going for years, though he had a few narrow squeaks. He had a splendid plan at election times. All the people were allowed to vote, which kept them quiet, but as they never counted the votes Diaz used to announce that he had been elected again, and everyone was satisfied.

European Catholics would hardly recognize their religion if they met it out in Mexico. The Aztecs had a most bloodthirsty one before Cortes conquered the country, with human sacrifices and all sorts of abominations, and though the natives were converted at the point of the sword, they seem to have brought this original spirit and feeling into their Catholicism, and made it into rather a gruesome faith. The native priests behave most scandalously, claiming all sorts of rights in the name of our Lord—even over a bride at her wedding, and extorting money from the wretched peons. They charge so much for marriages that it makes such a ceremony quite impossible for the very poor, so they go and live together without. They are very faithful, and look upon it as being as binding as a marriage, but sometimes their grandchildren have a sudden wish to legalize the affair, and so all subscribe towards their grandparents' wedding—which takes place with great rejoicings.

The graft among Government officials is perfectly

awful. All the business people told us that everyone from the highest to the lowest had to have his bit, or else they would make it impossible for their trade to carry on. The peons are so patient and pathetic, they live on very little food. Their houses are just four mud walls, no roof or furniture, sometimes only two sides of a square in some odd corner where two walls meet, a few little bits of pottery to hold water and food being their only possessions ; but they are very religious according to their lights. There is one old church which has a big mast with square-rigged sails all bricked over standing in the churchyard. This was carried all the way from the coast, about 800 miles, by some sailors who were caught in a terrible storm ; they prayed to the Virgin Mary to save them, and vowed that if she did they would carry the mast and sails of their boat all the way to their native church.

All the pawnshops in Mexico are run by the Government, so the people get a fair price for their things they either pawn or sell. One day we met a man we knew struggling out from one of these places, carrying a lot of carriage harness—a saddle and a bridle—which his coachman had pawned, being in need of some money to pay his debts. It was looked on as quite the correct thing to do in stable circles as long as the ticket was given to their master so that he could redeem the things. Our friend told us that it was no use dismissing his coachman, as if he got another one he would do just the same.

There was quite a severe earthquake while we were in Mexico. I was coming along a passage and suddenly noticed myself staggering from side to side, and that there were large waves on the big water tanks below which broke high up over the passage, as if it

had been a sea wall. When I got to my room all the jugs and basins were sliding about and came crashing down on the ground. The furniture started to move about too. I didn't realize what it was—just thought I was giddy and lay down on my bed. Nobody seemed to worry, they often have these shocks there. Some people think that the basin in the hills where the City stands was once a huge crater.

On the way back to Texas we stayed at the El Oro Gold Mine with the chief engineer and the manager. It is about eight hours from the City by train, and has a tiny station of its own, with a miniature line and train running up for six miles into the mountains to a small Indian town. They had a lovely house with the most gorgeous view, but I could hardly move or breathe, as it was 10,000 feet up. The people there are pure Aztec and very wild, so the El Oro Company hire a regiment of soldiers from the Government to protect the mine and the lives of our two friends.

We found them rather excited, as they had just managed to prevent a rising the week before. Some native girl who had a fancy for the manager gave the plot away to him, and told him that the soldiers had all been persuaded to join in, so he wired secretly to have the regiment changed, and when this was carried out the whole revolt fell through, as they had not time to bribe the new soldiers in the few days left, and it wasn't worth while rising once the three months' output of gold bars was sent off.

They are just as ruthless to each other. The day we got there they had pushed a wretched man down the mine shaft—on account of some dispute—and as it's 600 feet down, there were only a few bits of him to be picked up at the bottom.

When we went down I was dressed up as a man—as there is a native superstition against women going inside a mine. There was a cage with no sides to it, and the heat was awful. It was rather like going down an enormous chimney. The passages in the mine were very low—one had to go along all doubled up—but the miners were such tiny little men that they not only walked upright, but wore their huge straw hats, which had a naked lighted candle stuck in the front of each. They wore hardly any clothes.

Work never stopped, as the twenty-four hours were divided into three shifts of 1,000 men each. The tunnel went on right under the mountain, and you sort of felt the weight of it on your head.

When we got to the shaft up which the ore was taken to the surface, the rush of foul air going up was so strong that I fell down in a faint, and woke up to find a cluster of miners throwing buckets of filthy water over me.

You could not see any gold—it looked to me like blue veins in reddy-brown rocks. Afterwards we were shown how the gold was extracted from the ore. They call it the cyanide process, and have huge stamps pounding the rock up—while water carries the dust down over beds of zinc. There were twenty-five stamps in one house, and it was deafening. The manager kept shouting explanations, but it was like being in a storm at sea. You could see his mouth opening and shutting, but couldn't hear a word.

The local people were passionately religious. They have the most realistic processions and Passion plays on all saints' days and feasts of the Church. On Lady Day there was to be a procession of twenty virgins. However, the only available virgins seem hardly to

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have deserved the name, and had to be carried on account of their delicate health. Through Easter week they just spread themselves and live each day through with absolute fidelity to the Bible story. On Good Friday they were having the procession to the Crucifixion—one man taking the part of our Lord and another that of Judas Iscariot, etc. All of a sudden some tipsy outsider, who was standing by watching them pass, threw half a brick at the man who was taking the part of Jesus. The whole procession stopped, and stood solemnly waiting while the man who was attacked beat the drunkard into a pulp with the cross he was carrying, and then, picking up all the bits which had broken off it, proceeded on his way, the whole procession moving on quite seriously as if nothing had happened.

The priest had lent the thirty pieces of silver, and it was understood that Judas should give it back, but unfortunately he could not resist the temptation to have a little gamble with it first, and he lost the whole lot at some native Casino.

Going down to the station on the main line was not a pleasant experience. Our train passed there at 2 a.m., so about midnight they put my box on a small flat hand-car without any sides to it ; at each corner crouched a native, looking like human porcupines, as they had cloaks made of layers and layers of straw. We sat on the box in the middle. They gave us a shove at the top and down the line we flew, 2,000 feet in six miles ; the rain was coming down in a real tropical shower, enormous drops of warm rain that felt like huge fat slugs. It was pitch dark, and we were drenched to the skin in two or three minutes. We could feel ourselves rounding the frightful curves, backwards and forwards on the zig-zag line, clinging on fiercely, but seeing

nothing. At the bottom there was a long straight run which took us alongside the main rails and finally on to them, right up to the platform. The train going to Mexico, which was to pass the express we were to catch at some station about twenty miles farther on, was due about then. When we were going down this straight bit we could hear it thundering along at our backs. We looked round and saw the great lights shining out of the awful blackness. It seemed to be absolutely dead behind us, and we could not see if we had got on to the main line or not. I shall never forget the awful concussion as it caught us up and passed us by. We seemed to be almost underneath it, so near that one could have touched it. We sat absolutely paralysed on the handcar, which was still going at a good pace on its own momentum, but we were quite helpless to stop it.

When we got to the platform we were slowing down, and the railway people caught the car and helped us off. The rain was still coming down in sheets, and our clothes were so saturated that they clung to us like bathing-gowns. When our train did come in we had to put the trunks in the luggage van—so were left to drip miserably from Monday night till Wednesday evening. Nothing on earth would make our clothes dry, and our boots squelched when we stood up in them. However, we never even got a cold.

Just before we got to the frontier at Laredo I noticed a big camp, and wondered if it was soldiers on manœuvres or what. As I was pondering on it a very pleasant man came along, sat down, and began to chat. He asked me how I liked Mexico, and of course I raved about it, but he said that the City was not a patch on Vera Cruz. Luckily I was in a truthful mood, as I

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might easily have agreed with him to save argument. However, I told him that we did not go there, as we heard that there were some cases of yellow fever in that town—upon which he got up without a word and left me. I was sorry he had taken it so much to heart, until I discovered that he was the quarantine doctor who gets on to the train at the station before the frontier and tries to find out if anyone has been in the yellow fever zone. Anyone who let out that they had been to Vera Cruz got hauled off with screams and cries and kept in that beastly camp for two or three weeks' quarantine, where they probably caught it, even if they had not got it already. It was marvellous to get to San Antonio on Wednesday evening with baths and dry clothes and civilization again. We stayed the night and went on to San Angelo next day.

CHAPTER IV

WE did a lot of shooting in Texas, quail and ducks mostly. We drove along, and when Dock, the pointer, marked the game, Claud would throw the reins on to the backs of the horses, and jump down with his gun. As long as the reins were on their backs they never moved, even if he let off his gun quite near. The riding horses were trained in the same way. If you threw the reins over their heads, nothing would make them move. Mr. Bouncer loved to come out shooting with us too, but he was very naughty, and would rush in when Dock was pointing and put up the birds before Claud was ready. He really was a little deaf from bathing in the creeks so much, but like a lot of deaf people, he never heard us calling if it happened not to suit him to do so. Claud tried tying a big handkerchief to his collar, and expected me to hold on to him, but he was so strong he just dragged me along too, through shrubs and brambles, until I was covered with scratches and pricks from head to foot. One day we had our revenge on Mr. B. He had rushed into a wide bit of water to retrieve a dead duck, and when he was quite close to it the duck suddenly revived and gave a last dying quack which completely shattered Bouncer's nervous system. He swam round and round in a circle, barking fiercely, but nowhere near that duck would he go.

One bit of our ranch was a very historical old place called Kickapoo. It had been the headquarters of a fierce tribe of Red Indians of that name in old days.

Our dining-room was one of the rock houses which had been built by an old pioneer settler, and the Indians were always trying to kill him. One night he was sitting all alone when he heard what he thought were Indians creeping up to his door, so he let off his gun two or three times, shooting straight through the door, and heard something fall on the other side. Next morning there was his favourite pony shot dead, lying in front of the door. I believe it sent him nearly mad. The holes made by these bullets are still in the door. Another time the wife of some man who lived there went off by herself on a horse after the Indians, who had kidnapped her children. They admired her pluck so much that they let the children go.

When the American Government moved all the Red Indians away from these and other parts, they took a large tract of land and settled them on it. We passed through the Indian territory in the train on our way down, and it certainly did not look as if they valued their land much, for I never saw such a depressing, derelict country in my life. Every man, woman, and child has an allowance of so many dollars a head from the Government, and lots of disreputable whites marry the young squaws so as to be supported by their incomes. The Americans do not seem to object to these marriages, though they would go mad if a white person married a negro.

In Texas the laws are so prudish, even among white people, that no bachelor can have a housekeeper, however old and hideous she may be. Two old brothers of over seventy who had a ranch near us were had up before the Court and told they must marry the monstrous old woman of seventy-five who cooked for them, but they managed to get out of it by saying the Court

must decide which was to marry her, and each time the Court did decide on one, he would start a lawsuit to prove it should be his brother.

Our cowboys used to have to go on the Jury sometimes. I remember Gus Locke going on a murder case. They let the man off because the foreman said, "See here, boys, you never know when any of us might be in trouble, and it's no good starting a bad precedent." They agreed that the man who was shot "wasn't much account," so they thought the murderer hadn't done much harm, and let him go.

There was an awful case while we were there of an old man called Miles. He lived about fifty miles from us, and had a very bad reputation, having murdered his first wife quite callously, and when a jury brought in a verdict of guilty against him, he escaped, and out of revenge collected a band of ruffians. He returned with them one night, set fire to all the houses in the town, shooting the people as they ran out into the street from their burning homes. After that no jury could be got to convict him. All these stories were revived at the time I am speaking of, as he had had a dispute with a man named Ball over a bit of land which undoubtedly belonged to the latter. Each time Ball put up a fence, Miles pulled it down, till at last they had a lawsuit, which Ball won. This infuriated Miles, so he hid behind a bush along the track, waiting in vain all day for his enemy to pass. Later in the evening Ball's two sons of fifteen and seventeen came riding along, and the old brute shot them both through the head with one shot as they rode past him side by side.

Miles's sons, though they hated their father, and hadn't spoken to him for years, rushed round pressing five-dollar bills into everybody's hands who they

thought might have influence at the trial and succeeded in bribing the Judge.

They never seem to give a longer sentence than two years in the penitentiary out in Texas even for bad cases of murder, and generally after about six months move the prisoners unobtrusively to some other State and let them out.

Naturally, this leads to people taking the law into their own hands, and is the real reason for the lynching and the blood feuds that go on in the Southern and Western States. The judges get so badly paid, and have to be elected with each change of government, so they always try to keep in with everyone, and also are glad to supplement their small incomes with presents from the friends of the judged.

Every year in October they held a Fair in San Angelo, and had roping competitions for which all the famous cowboy ropers from a hundred miles round gathered together. They let the steer loose and the time is taken from the moment of handing the rope to the rider. He gets it ready as he gallops along, throws it over the horns of the steer, and then rides at right angles until the rope, which has been twisted tightly round the horn of the saddle, becomes suddenly taut. The pony, being prepared for the shock, sticks his toes in the ground, but the steer is thrown to the ground. The rider jumps off, and runs to tie the steer's legs together, then throws up his hands to show he has done. The record then was two and a half minutes. The whole art is to train the pony to lean its whole weight against the rope, as if it slackens at all, the steer can rise before the cowboy gets to him. The worst of this Fair is that, as the steers are bought on purpose, and nobody cares what becomes of them, the

rougher cowboys are inclined to throw them with the intent of injuring them to prevent them rising, which is quite wrong, as well as being too horrible.

The whole reason for roping at all is to doctor the cattle. They so often get sore places during the summer, either from fighting or rubbing against the fence, and if flies settle on the wound it becomes all rotten and full of maggots. The cowboys ride ceaselessly round the pastures all through the hot weather noticing all the beasts in turn as much as possible, and when they see one with a sore they drive it off by itself, rope and throw it, and with their little case of ointmentsslung round their shoulders, dress the wound, untie their legs, and run like a hare back to their horse. Very often, if it's a bull or a bad-tempered cow, it chases the cowboy for miles when it gets on to its feet again.

Naturally, it would be against the interests of the owner of the cattle if cowboys injured the latter when roping, so I think that the same thing should hold at the Fairs, and the rule made to disqualify anyone unless the steer gets up and trots away in perfect condition. I used to be in an agony of anxiety every time a steer was thrown until it was safely up and on its legs again, after seeing two or three with broken legs or dislocated necks. It really was revolting.

They had buck-jumping at the Fair too, the real thing, not horses with string tied under their tails to make them wild, like we saw at the Rodeo at Wembley, but real bronco busters, that were completely untamable. Some of the riders were marvellous.

Everybody attended the Fair in their best clothes, and sat on very hard benches for hours each day, while their children chewed pea-nuts and pelted each other

with shells. These pea-nut battles were rather like the gangsters' fights, those most injured being innocent spectators, who received painful blows about the face at unexpected moments, thus causing great merriment among the uninjured.

We had our round up at the end of October. Claud used to start off at daylight every morning. I followed in my surrey to the meeting-place, getting there at about eleven. This was always at some very large open bit of country near a stockyard, which was made of whole logs buried deeply into the ground, very high, and put as closely together as possible. A long shute made on the same plan ran out from the gate, getting wider and wider as it got to the end, and one side coming farther out than the other. When I got to the appointed place, I used to sit and wait, reading my book in dead silence. Presently various cows and calves would come trotting up with alarmed faces, and then, seeing nothing to upset them, would quiet down and start eating. More and more cattle would begin to arrive; gradually from every side little bunches of them would appear, and then more and more with much bellowing and roaring, all apparently brought up by magic to the same place, as there was no sign of any riders until the very last. By that time a huge herd was collected from all corners of the pasture, and were restlessly tramping round and round, the little calves scuttling out of the way, losing their mothers for a moment and then finding them again with joyous little bleats. It really was a marvellous sight.

When all the cowboys had collected from every direction the cutting out began. There is always a certain number of stray cattle in every herd, from neighbouring ranches, that have managed to get through the

fence during the year. These are cut out first, their brand noted, and a message sent later to the owner. Then the odd yearlings, and steers that have got mixed up with the cows are cut out, which means that the animal that has to be got rid of is followed steadily through all the herd until it gets to the edge, when one of the cowboys lying in wait rides it off for two or three hundred yards, out of the way. When this is finished they drive the cows and calves down the chute into the pen. It holds a good many at a time, but when full they have to be very nippy running the cows out again and intercepting the frightened little calves when they try to follow. Sometimes the cow turns and goes for the men, who scuttle out of the way with all speed.

The branding of the calves was the part I hated. All the men being on foot inside the stockyard, they make a fire. Someone ropes a calf and throws it, and then they all seem to set on it. One brands it with a hot iron, another dips its ear into the mark of the ranch, another does the gelding if it is a bull calf, while Claud inoculated it against black leg. Of course the whole thing takes only about half a minute to do, and the calf is up again and rushing away shaking itself like a dog and apparently none the worse before you can look round ; but when there are hundreds of them being done one after another, it makes you feel somehow as if it was one continual calf the whole way through, and is very sickening. I used to go far away, as I could not bear to hear them bleating or see the distracted mothers racing round the pen bellowing and trying frantically to find a way to get inside to protect their babies.

As they let the calf out, the cow rushes to it and licks it all over in an agony of anxiety, but the calf

seems to forget all about it and frisks about quite happily by its mother's side.

We had marvellous dinners at midday. The cowboys camp out all through the round up, sleeping on the ground round the fire with an old blanket to cover them. They have a waggon, on the back of which is fastened a cupboard where all the food is kept. Charlie Martin did the cooking, and was very good. He was a very meek-looking boy, and not at all one's idea of the Wild West, but when we first arrived at the ranch he said to Zilpha, "At last you have seen a real gen-u-ine cowboy," and was very hurt when she giggled. He was a great hand at baking hot biscuits (rather like breakfast scones), and made a glorious stew in a huge iron cauldron standing on three legs over the fire. Everything was put in, meat, potatoes, and a great handful of red peppers. We all sat round and were given a tin plate, each in turn fishing what we fancied out of the pot with a large iron spoon. A bucket of water with a tin dipper stood for the company to drink out of, and the hot biscuits instead of bread were handed round in the baking-pan. Strong black coffee is the second course—quite the most delicious feast anyone could imagine.

The cowboys are a very funny mixture, very rough in some ways, and quite childish in others. I think it must be the strong air that makes everyone very nervy; sometimes they seem as if they might cry at any moment. When Gus Locke was sinking a well, we went over to see how he was getting on, and he said with a tear in his voice, "I'm right discouraged." Claud told him he was drilling in the wrong place, and I was terrified lest he should burst into floods of tears.

We left the ranch on November 7th, and were to stay

one night with the Ions before starting for home. When we were sitting round talking to them that evening, an old Irishwoman, called Mary, who had come out as a servant years before, and saved quite a lot of money, suddenly turned up and asked to speak to Claud. She told him that she intended going back to Ireland, but as she did not like travelling alone she had decided to travel with us. She also said that, having made enquiries and found that she could not sit or feed with us on board the boat if she went second class, she had decided to come first class. Claud was so paralysed with horror at the prospect that he made no comment, and she departed, saying she would meet us at the station the next afternoon. Luckily Mr. Ions was the agent for the White Star Line in San Angelo, so when she went to arrange about her berth the next morning he told her that the ship was full up, and saved our lives.

We went via St. Louis to New York, and crossed in the *Oceanic*. There were some lovely damp fogs off the banks of Newfoundland, and I sat out on deck and revelled in the moisture of the air again after the drought of all those months in Texas. My face had become absolutely white, but a couple of days in the soft mist brought back all my usual colour again. Everybody else seemed to dislike the weather and stayed indoors, but when it got cold and bright again, I found my chair was next to some very nice people, called Mr. and Mrs. Pargny from Pittsburg. We first made friends when I noticed that she was shivering with the cold, so I lent her one of my hot-water bottles. She seemed amazed at the idea of such things, but soon got converted. We went to Liverpool and straight on to Susan's flat in North Audley Street. Luckily the one

above was vacant, so we took that too, and all lived there together. Susan got engaged to Hugh Dawnay on February 26th, and my baby, Clodagh Blanche, was born on the 28th.

When we went back to Texas for the second time the following November I had to leave the baby behind, as she was not very strong, so my sister-in-law took charge of her at Curraghmore, and she stayed there the whole winter. It was dreadful to leave her when she was eight months old, and just beginning to be interesting, but we went off on November 6th from Queens-town, and got to the ranch on the 17th.

Soon after we got back to Texas we had the most awful storm, which they call a "norther" there. We used always to look out in the paper for the notices about the weather in Canada, and if there was a bad blizzard there, we could be certain that in five days it would get down to us, and almost tell to the hour when it would start.

There are no mountains to stop it, so when we saw the grey line in the north we knew that in less than twelve hours we would be in the middle of a howling storm, with driving sleet and freezing cold.

Everybody rushed up and down to get their jobs finished and plenty of trees cut for the wood pile, to keep us going till it was over.

My goodness, it was a storm! The cold was so intense that though we kept up a huge fire in my bedroom night and day, and had a big oil-stove burning as well, the water in the jug, which was standing quite close to the fire, was frozen solid every morning. We put on all the clothes we could find, and heaped blankets and eiderdowns from all the rooms on to the bed, but were still so cold we could not sleep. It lasted five

days, and then suddenly cleared off, and became just like summer again. Icicles were still hanging from the trees, and the poor cattle were lying dead and dying all over the place. They came and died near the fence round the yard, which was most depressing. The first time we went in to San Angelo after the storm we drove through an avenue of corpses all the way, as the poor things seem to have come to the track and collapsed there. It certainly was a very smelly drive, but the horrible carrion crows soon picked their bones clean, and left an avenue of skeletons instead.

My uncle, Delaval Beresford, having gone out to Texas when he was young, was living in Mexico at that time. So I wrote and told him that I was on the ranch, and asked him to come and stay. He said he would, and I was very excited to see him, but also rather nervous, as all the stories about him sounded very wild. He lived on a ranch in the district of Chihuahua, which was about 100 miles from the town of that name. Whenever he went into this town he used to go on the razzle, and though he started out three times to come to see us, he never turned up, because after his orgy in Chihuahua he always forgot why he had come there and just went home again. However, perhaps it was just as well, as if he had got as far as San Angelo and had his razzle there, he would have disgraced me for ever.

It was rather sad really, because the reason he originally went to Texas was that he fell in love with a girl and they got engaged, so it was arranged that he should go out to Texas and "make his fortune," returning in three years to be married. After being out there for a year he got a letter from the girl saying she had changed her mind and was marrying someone

else. So he went all to bits, and never bothered to come home or keep up with his family at all. Whenever I saw an awful-looking rough tramp riding up to the ranch I used to think to myself, "I do hope this is not Uncle Delaval."

We left Angelo on March 18th, and went to stay with the Pargnys at Pittsburg on our way home. Mr. Pargny is one of the big men in the Steel Trust, and they had a very nice house on the edge of the town. It was very funny to come straight from the life on the ranch into all the entertainments that were going on at Pittsburg, and I had no proper evening dresses or suitable clothes, but only a couple of tea-gowns. However, luckily they thought I must be "artistic." We went to see Mr. Charlie Schwabe. He gave a party in the afternoon, and everybody was drinking champagne all over the house, even in the bedrooms. He showed us lots of pictures he had bought in Europe, and pulled a couple of Rubens out of his bathroom.

In America it is taken for granted that English people have no sense of humour, and they are always telling stories to illustrate this point. One that I heard in Pittsburg was rather good, and, moreover, rather shows the type of humour which Americans delight in. A lawyer called Strange was dying, and he told his family not to put anything on his tombstone except these words: "Here lies the body of an honest lawyer," because he said that anyone passing and reading that epitaph would say, "That's strange." This story was supposed to be told to a very stupid Englishman who seemed delighted with it, and laughed a lot, but when he told it himself to other people, he forgot the last bit, saying, "You see, anyone passing and reading that epitaph would say at once, 'How peculiar.'"

All the women of Pittsburg were mad about lectures at that time ; Mrs. Pargny took me to one. The lecturer was being made a great fuss of, and we were much amused to hear him tell them that this craving of theirs for his lectures " was a dangerous form of mental dissipation." They were thrilled and longed to be more dissipated still !! but Mrs. Pargny and I thought we had had enough dissipation for the time being.

We came home on the *Cedric*, and got to Queenstown on April 2nd. I began to get so excited by that time, I could hardly bear to live through the few hours till I got to Curraghmore. When we got into the tender at Queenstown I cried so much Claud wouldn't stay near me at all, he said everybody would think I had left my best young man on the ship, but I couldn't stop, and went on crying all the way up in the train till I got to Kilmacthomas Station, where I suddenly caught sight of the two grey horses, so rushed out of the train, dropping all my belongings, and found my small daughter sitting up in the brougham. She put out a hand and said, " How do you do, Mummy ? " in the most matter-of-fact voice. I got an awful shock, as I had never heard her speak before.

I did not go out to Texas again, but Claud used to go every winter until he sold the ranch, and dear old Peter Petch would greet him each time with the same remark : " While you was away, Mr. Anson, I had like to died." Poor old Peter ! He was very nervous of his health, and always thought that he was going to die. Another remark of his that I loved was : " Mr. So-and-so, he took religion, and next thing he went blum grazzy."

CHAPTER V

WE took a little house in Park Street that winter, which looked over Grosvenor House Garden and the Park. This sounds very nice, but had its drawbacks, as the draughts came swishing in at the bottom of the windows and the carpet behaved like the waves of the sea. My son Anthony John was born on New Year's Day 1904, and almost directly after that event we had a series of terrible disasters. The first one was bad news from Texas.

I must explain that every year the three-year-old steers were driven from the ranch down to the cotton country, where there were huge mills, in which the cotton itself is divided from the seed in the centre, the latter being crushed into cotton-seed meal or cake, which is wonderfully fattening stuff to feed cattle on. At all of these mills there would be thousands and thousands of head of cattle in pens, where they were fed on the cake before being shipped to market. I think it took about six or seven weeks to get them fat, and when they were sold and the cotton mills and other expenses paid off, the residue was the income for the year from the ranch. We had a thousand head of cattle feeding at this time, and they were within about a week of being ready for market, when a terrible thunderstorm came up right over their heads. The cattle took fright and got into a panic. All those thousands and thousands of steers started running, and they ran and ran, trampling on each other in a blind frenzy of fear, for miles and miles into the blue. Hundreds were killed outright,

and nearly all were so badly injured as to be of no further use. We eventually got thirty poor bedraggled beasts back out of all our thousand head. There was the cotton cake they had eaten to be paid for, and no year's income.

On top of this came the news that Claud's brother Henry in the Highland Light Infantry had died tragically in Jersey, as it happened by bad luck no member of the family was in London at that moment except two Anson nieces and myself, so we had the task of breaking these sad tidings to his mother (the Dowager Lady Lichfield). We sent a messenger with a note to tell her sister, the Duchess of Buccleuch, but when he got to Montagu House, they told him that the Duchess had gone out to some very large State dinner (as she was Mistress of the Robes then to Queen Alexandra). However, they took the note on, and got it delivered to her as the ladies were coming out from dinner.

I had stayed with my mother-in-law, who was so plucky and good, though terribly upset, but my relief was great when I heard Aunt Tiny Buccleuch's carriage dashing up. It was so extraordinary to see her come into the room so magnificently dressed with her marvellous jewels almost completely covering her gown, a huge tiara on her head, and tears pouring down her cheeks. I just slipped out of the room so as to leave the two sisters alone together, but she was so amazingly thoughtful always, even in her grief, and as I passed, whispered : " Tell the carriage to take you home and come back," which saved my life, as I had only just got up the day before for the first time, and was very shaky and weak.

Then Clodagh fell terribly ill with dysentery, and Tony turned bright green, wept bitterly all day long,

and couldn't digest any known form of food. In fact, he roared so persistently day and night that Clodagh alluded to the room he was in as "noisy London," having heard someone use this phrase. Perfect strangers would stop Nanny in the park, pointing out to her how awful he looked, and saying reassuringly, "That child won't live!"; altogether life was difficult.

The next thing was to find a roof for our heads, so Claud went over to Ireland and discovered a place which had been empty for ten years, called Ballysaggartmore, on the Blackwater River, one of those houses that are built round a grass courtyard, and look like a young town, but have not really very much room in them, as there are no passages. It was originally built by a man in the bad times, who was very unpopular with the farmers, he having moved them off that bit of land and stuck them down on the mountains, which does sound rather hard luck on them, poor things. Anyhow, they hated him like poison, so when he built his house he had to turn all the windows looking into the courtyard to prevent the people shooting at him and his family from outside. When things got quieter his son added an absolutely different house back to back with the old one along the front, and as it was half-way up a very steep hill, there was a glorious view from these front windows, but even the son seemed to think it quite unnecessary to have any passages, so you either had to walk through the front lot of rooms or the back ones if you wanted to get to the front door. Another peculiarity was that being built on such a steep hill, they had to cut out the land to make the back part of the square, so that if you walked up the path to the garden, on the outside of the house, you found yourself

treading on the roof at the top. Anyhow, we loved it, and lived there for many years.

Looking back this seems a very peaceful time, but I expect one has forgotten all the desperate ups and downs, and fusses and upsets that happen in all families from day to day. All I can remember are a few of the funny little things the children did and said. How I took Clodagh out to tea and some older child who was there said : " Do you think you had better have more cake ; it might make you sick when you get home ? " to which she replied quite firmly : " If I'm sick at all, I'll be sick immediately," which caused consternation at the party. I took her over to be bridesmaid to her godmother, Lady Norah Hely-Hutchinson, when she was four years old, and her attendant page suddenly threw his arms round her neck in the middle of the service and embraced her with large resounding kisses. We saw her whisper something to him, and afterwards she told us that she had said to him : " Not to kiss so loud." There was a little stream that ran through the field near the house, and one day, when the children had strayed in that direction, they had a great wish to get over it, so Clodagh had the bright idea of lying across it to make a bridge for Tony. Of course when he trod on her back it pushed her right down into the water and he fell in on top. The problem then was how they were to dry their clothes, but being full of resource they took them off, and hung them out with the greatest care and trouble on the wire fence. As it was raining at the time this plan was not wholly successful, which was a great disappointment. However, we found them later skipping about in the stream like water-babies, still confidently waiting for the drying line to do its work.

Susan's children used to come to stay ; they were very sturdy and large, and mine being thin and tall, the Dawnays had some difficulty in keeping pace with them. One of them confided to me after a long game and much running about that his " poor nicker negs do nake." They came to church one Sunday, and we had the hymn " Once in Royal David's City." Peter complained to me about it afterwards. He said, " David gives himself such awful airs about his hymn, but I don't care, I can sing as loud as he does, and I just sing it ' Once in Royal Peter's City.' " David had a great reputation for bravery ; once, when Hugh was quartered at Windsor, there was a plague of frogs, and one of these clammy creatures came into the drawing-room of their little house. My sister said : " Oh ! there's a frog, you might just put it out." Hugh looked doubtful and said he didn't care about touching frogs, so rang for the butler, and when he came, pointed to the frog, saying : " Just put that frog outside." Spicer said : " H'm, I'm not over-fond of frogs myself," and went for Delia, the housemaid, who solved the problem with great promptness and despatch. She said : " I'll just go up and get Master David, he's wonderful clever with frogs." David, who was already in bed, came down in his dressing-gown and removed the frog with all speed, while everybody tried to look as off-hand as possible, wearing the expression of those who have thought out a little treat expressly to give pleasure to the child.

We used to have great fun when Hugh and Susan came to stay. Hugh was so clever and had such a subtle wit that we hardly ever could get the better of him, even when we attacked him in force. The only time we scored was when he said that his ancestors had come over with William the Conqueror and that their

battle-cry as they galloped into the mêlée at Hastings was "Da'Awnay, Da'Awnay," so Susan and I declared that we had come over *as* William the Conqueror, and that we distinctly remembered calling "Come hither, varlet!" to him on the boat crossing over, this flight of fancy being bred of the legend that the Lords Worcester, ancestors to the Dukes of Beaufort, were descended from John of Gaunt, son of Edward III, thus taking us back to the mighty William. I think there must be some truth in the idea, as 1066 is the only date I ever have been able to remember in history !!!

It was a Marquess of Worcester who wrote a treatise in 1663 about the power of steam. He watched a kettle, and got the notion from it like Watt did, but the idea was so much before its time that his family were quite sure he was mad and shut him up.

The children used to love staying with Granny Beaufort at Stoke. Clodagh had a great reputation for loving-kindness, as directly they arrived she would rush round saying, "Give poor Nanny a cup of tea." We did not disclose that this thoughtfulness on her part was not dictated from purely philanthropic motives, for fear of ruining her prestige, but in point of fact she looked on the last spoonful of moist sugar in the bottom of Nanny's cup as her perquisite.

Granny was so punctual that we all had to be standing ready at the front door when the carriage came out of the stable yard and drove up to the door. I remember my father chaffing her about some occasion when he would have it that she had been late through going by mistake to the wrong door. He christened her "Hang about—late hunt and drive." Grandpapa was always two hours late for everything, so it was amazing that either of them ever caught the train they meant to catch, as



LADY SUSAN DAWSON
(Lady Susan Beresford)

she got to the station early enough to get the one before and he was so unpunctual you would have thought that he was bound to miss about two trains and catch the third. He always wrote his letters in the train, but it did not make any difference, as no one could possibly decipher them in any case. If Mother was away when we got a letter from him we used to send it on to her, saying, "Please translate this letter for us," and she would write what she thought the words were over the top.

Granny died in 1906. I went across for the day to her funeral, travelling over one night and returning the next. I got the train stopped at the new Badminton station. Granny had cut the first sod for that bit of railway some years before. Sir Weetman Pearson built it, and we all had a champagne luncheon in a marquee tent on a ploughed field to celebrate the occasion one very cold day of winter. It all came back to me that sad day. Granny was such a wonderful person. We loved her and missed her so.

CHAPTER VI

IN November 1906 I had to have an operation, and as the doctors recommended a trip abroad my friends Frank and Helen Bulkeley Johnson very nobly took me with them to Algiers. They said, "We will go and sit in the sun," and if we could have found any sun, undoubtedly we would have sat in it. We went across from Marseilles in a villainous boat, which smelt of garlic. The sea was rough, but we bore up. Nothing mattered; our glowing visions of glorious days and moonlit nights kept us indifferent to all temporary discomforts. The boat arrived at Algiers in the early morning. It was raining in torrents. We drove rather silently out to a big hotel on the edge of the town. The next day it snowed. Helen and I shared a room. There was a very small stove in it. We took it in turns to sit in front of this with a blanket off the bed round our shoulders, the other one claiming the fur coat and travelling rug. Frank spent his time wrestling with the railway people over seats in some apparently mythical train which was supposed to go to Biskra. After another two days of blizzard the train materialized and tickets were procured.

With joyful sighs of relief we hurried to the station and started off. After travelling most of the day through higher and higher mountains, we finally got stuck in a snowdrift on the top. It was not a corridor train. There was no dining-car or any food available, not even the most ordinary conveniences. The carriage was lighted with little lamps, the wicks floating about

in small saucers of oil. It was not possible to read, and as night drew on even these lights flickered and went out one by one, so we sat gazing out on to the snow hour after hour, every now and then startled by the sight of some wild-looking Arab face pressed against the outside of the window. Helen put her head on Frank's shoulder and went to sleep. The French honeymoon couple who shared our carriage frankly wound their arms round each other and snored peacefully together. I sat up in my corner feeling very lonely and spinsterish, dozing occasionally and waking up again with a jerk.

When morning came we were still there. There was a pump by the side of the line ; someone found a spade and dug the snow away from it. Frank caused a sensation by hanging his little sponge bag on the pump handle while he did an elaborate wash and shave, to the great admiration of all the people on the train. His audience were breathless with interest and excitement. One American woman said to me afterwards, " I think your husband is wonderful. I watched him doing his toilet under the pump." I didn't like to undeceive her, as I was getting such a lot of credit for the way I had trained him, so tried to look as if Helen were my daughter.

We got very matey with all our companions in distress, and used to crawl along the footboard and discuss with them any rumours that were going. Helen's tea-basket was strained to capacity in providing sustenance. Luckily a few Arabs appeared from nowhere with some eggs, which we cooked in the tea-kettle. After twenty-six hours of stagnation a snow-plough was seen in the distance, gradually working its way through to our release, and when it eventually did get to within a few

feet of our engine the cheering and excitement were intense.

The following night at about twelve o'clock we got to some station down in the plains on the other side of the mountains and slept in a tiny inn. I had the end room. There were the most extraordinary sounds all night outside my window, as if something were beating against the house. In the morning I found it was the floods, which had formed into a huge lake as far as the eye could see, quite big waves washing up against the walls of the inn.

We got a train from this junction to Biskra, and went through the gates of the desert the next afternoon. It really is extraordinary. Outside were endless floods, rain, bitterly cold, and in front some brown barren-looking hills with a very narrow pass through them. It took about twenty minutes to get to the other side, and then we found ourselves on a sandy plain with clumps of date palms, Arabs riding about on donkeys, camels, warmth, and everything one had always imagined the desert to be. We travelled on in the train to Biskra, absolutely thrilled with it all, and feeling that at last we had got to the end of our difficulties, but when we arrived at our destination that evening the station was being besieged by visitors who said that they had been stuck there for ages and could not get away for love or money, which rather quenched our spirits.

There were several people we knew staying at the hotel, and we soon found that the only topic of conversation entirely centred around the hope of a speedy departure. Apparently our train was the first to get through the snow from Algiers for weeks, and there were groans of despair when the news came next

day that a goods train, following ours, had fallen through one of the bridges we had crossed, which was washed away quite suddenly by some super-flood that swept down from the mountains. Everybody gave up in despair and resigned themselves to their fate. The sun really shone gloriously, and there was a huge balcony outside our rooms, but the food was ghastly, and had a sort of native twang about it that gradually got more and more revolting.

The worst of Biskra is that there really is nothing to do there at all once you have made the couple of expeditions to small native towns on neighbouring oases and wandered round the place itself. There is no further interest of any kind. Even the "Garden of Allah" is not a place you would want to sit in, being just an irrigated bit of land with some tropical plants growing. I believe that no one would think of going if it had not been for Mr. Hichens's book. I was very disappointed that he was not there, as I should have loved to meet him again after so many years.

Another drawback to the place was its being so unhealthy. We all woke up every morning with sore throats. I had with me a mouth-wash which was supposed to prevent one catching cold, and I found that gargling with this took the sore throat away. This got known to the people in the hotel, and gradually they formed a queue, complete with water in tooth glass, outside my bedroom door, waiting for a drop of the magic stuff every morning.

After being at Biskra for about a fortnight Helen uprose and declared that she was going away, even if she had to walk to the coast, so we took a chance and went back through the gates of the desert to the same

little inn, which was as far as the railway would guarantee to take us.

The floods were still lapping round the walls and the rain and hail were pouring down as usual, but the following day we found a feeble little train which was going in the direction of Constantine, so got into it hoping for the best. After about five hours we came to a place where the floods had washed the line away. The guard came along telling all the passengers to get out and walk, so we seized our bags, our rugs, the tea-basket, Helen's medicine chest, etc., and struggled along for about half a mile till we found another train. In the end we got so used to this mode of progression that we thought nothing of it, and even if the train stopped normally at a station, began mechanically collecting our belongings ready for a forced march.

At last we got to Constantine, which is renowned for its wonderfully fortified walls, but as it is by no means a cheerful place during a blizzard, I have no loving memories of it in spite of its walls. We journeyed on in the customary fashion, by footpath and railway line to Bone, and here Frank decided that the London sun was good enough for him, and so prepared to leave us. We had got round tickets by Tunis and Sicily, and the only way of reaching Tunis from Bone was by some decrepit car, which could be hired for vast sums to drag us over the intervening desert, this latter being thickly populated with brigands as far as we could gather from local report. Helen and I suddenly felt that we could not be left to the loving care of these bandits, so we both wept bitterly in turns until Frank promised to take us with him. Our one chance of getting back to Marseilles consisted in the faint hope of persuading the captain of a coasting vessel to take us on board at a

tiny place called Philippeville. So we hurried thither, and after much pleading escaped from Algeria for ever. Whether it was our thankfulness at getting away from the country or in consequence of a pale glimmer of sunlight which shone for a few minutes at Philippeville, certainly this seemed to us by far the most attractive spot we had yet encountered during our travels.

Once arrived at Marseilles Helen and I recovered our nerve and proceeded by ourselves to Monte Carlo. We were just settling down confidently to enjoy ourselves there when unfortunately Helen overheard one of the men in Cook's office remark to some would-be traveller that every seat in all the trains to Paris was booked up for the next fortnight. I saw a startled look as of a caged animal come over her face, and knew that all hope of peace was ended. From that moment we spent our days and nights at Cook's office, and Helen never rested until she had bribed some feeble-minded people to give up their sleepers to us. So we travelled on to Paris, where we did a lot of shopping, Helen insisting on getting three enormous air balloons for some little nieces. This entailed our carrying about fifteen extra parcels as well as the bags, tea-basket, etc., which we already had, our heavy luggage having been sent straight through. Of all these encumbrances the air balloons were far the worst, and these fell to my share. I had to hold my arm straight up in the air in the crush of getting on and off the boat. I tied them up over my head during the crossing, and they floated backwards and forwards, making me seasick. The train from Dover was crowded, but I held them on my lap all the way up. When we got into the four-wheeler at Victoria, and the bags, coats, rugs, and fifteen parcels

had been put in on top of us, I put my arm through the window and held the balloons outside. I took them with great care into the house, and then they burst !

The population of London had been basking in sunlight all through that February and March, and the whole country was suffering from a prolonged drought. When we heard this our cup was full.

Even when I returned to Ballysaggart I found that Ireland had had no rain either.

I brought back gifts for my family, but they would never play with any toys in the way they were intended to be used. I gave Tony a lovely milk cart. It had a big churn on the back with a tap and little milk cans hanging on the edges. I thought he would love to push it round delivering milk to all and sundry, but he took the churn and the milk cans out, got inside himself and said it was a boat. Then he had a horse on wheels, but instead of riding it he laid it on its side in the doorway and said it was a lobster pot. After I had fallen over it, picked it up and put it on one side several times, I got bored, and when he did it again took it away in a moment of heat and hid it. Tony wept and said that he knew his poor horse was missing him. "On the contrary," I replied, "your horse is very comfortable and happy ; he says I take much better care of him than you do," upon which Tony cried in an outraged voice : " Well then, he's not a true horse if he talks like that behind my back," and walked away with such a haughty mien that I felt quite abashed. I must say on thinking it over that I do not consider it was very nice of the horse myself.

The Harry Keane children were great friends of Hugo's. They lived in a big house opposite Ballysag,
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but had to drive all the way round by Lismore on account of the Blackwater River flowing between us. One day they were to come over to spend the day, but unfortunately Bobby got a cold and went to bed instead. He was very disappointed and rather embittered by this disaster, so just as his sister Freda was starting off he crept out of bed, and going to the top of the stairs called out after her, "I hope you have tapioca pudding for luncheon." Poor Freda turned quite pale at this terrible curse of Bobby's, and she and her mother drove the whole way round in dead silence. When they arrived I ran out to greet them, but Mrs. Keane took me aside in a mysterious manner and said to me rather nervously, "I suppose you haven't got tapioca pudding for lunch, have you?" Now I shared the Keane family's opinions of this disgusting dish, so I said politely, "Well no, I hadn't thought of having it, but of course——" and my voice died away in vague mutterings. To my relief Mrs. Keane's face became radiant and she called out quickly, "It's all right, Freda." Anyone who can remember in their childhood going out to lunch and meeting with a like disaster can picture for themselves the brooding horror and the wild relief of this little tragedy.

Another story of these two children always gave me great pleasure. Freda was inclined to be a bit patronizing at times to Bobby, as she was the elder. One day she said to him, "I was at your christening, Bobby, but of course you weren't at mine, because, you see, you were not born then," but Bobby was full of spirit, he wouldn't stand any nonsense, so he said, "I may not have been at your christening, but I saw it all the same. I was up in Heaven then, and God called me over and told me to look down and see my little sister. So I

looked, but I didn't think you were at all a nice baby ! ”

We used to go every summer to the dearest little seaside village called Ardmore, near Youghal, and as all our friends took houses there too, it was great fun. Sir Richard and Lady Musgrave, of Tourin Cappoquin, and their two girls, who were a little older than my children, generally came, and when Hugo was six he had a great pash for Lady Musgrave, and they became engaged ! He declared that he would poison Sir Richard with rotten mackerel, marry Lady Musgrave, and be an awfully cruel stepfather to Joan and Dorothy !

Poor darling old Sir Richard said it made him feel quite nervous, and that it completely put him off eating mackerel, which was a pity, as that year we had the most marvellous fishing. The sprats came right in up to the very edge of the shore, and when you paddled out they made the water so thick that it was like wading through mud. The mackerel followed on behind the sprats, and all the people were fishing with sticks and bits of string off the rocks, just pulling them in as hard as they could, unhooking them and throwing them into a shallow pool behind. The children paddled in and could actually catch the fish in their hands.

When Tony was small he spent his time pulling bits of seaweed out of danger on to the sands, as he said they would be drowned. When the tide came in he used to get frantic when he saw all his hard work was of no avail, the seaweed slowly floating out to sea again.

We took “Torby,” the donkey, down to Ardmore, and he always got above himself and became very familiar. Nothing would keep him from coming into the house. He could open the back door with his teeth, and when

the cook came into the kitchen in the morning she would find him lying fast asleep in front of the stove. He walked round under the nursery window and heehawed with his mouth wide open until the children dropped pieces of bread and jam into it. When I went out he followed me round the village like a dog, every now and then lying down to have a roll in the dust of the road. If I paid no attention and went on, he would half sit up in the middle of his roll and give a frightful roar, saying, as clearly as any donkey could, "Wait a minute, give a chap a chance." So I had to hang about until he had finished his dust bath, which made our progress very slow. My bedroom was on the ground-floor, and even that was not sacred to him ; but harness him up to his little trap, and off he would go, running away for about a mile at breakneck speed, scattering dogs, children, and chickens in every direction.

Claud was very keen on shooting, so we used to go round to all the shooting parties in the south of Ireland in September and October. Lord and Lady Castletown had very amusing parties at Granston, in Queen's County, and at Doneraile, in co. Cork. The latter place belonged to Lady Castletown, as her father was Lord Doneraile, and had left it to her. He was one of the few people who did not believe in a human being getting hydrophobia, and the extraordinary part about it was that he got hydrophobia himself from the bite of a pet fox, and died of it in terrible agonies. It was an ancestress of Lady Castletown's who was the only woman Freemason. She was very inquisitive about it, and hid herself in a large grandfather clock when her brother was having a Lodge at Doneraile. Towards the end of the meeting she sneezed and they discovered her. They dragged her out and discussed what was to

be done. Her brother said they should kill her—in true fraternal fashion—but the others decided that she be made a Freemason instead.

We went to the Shanbally shoot every year, too, driving there over the lovely pass on the Knockmealdown Mountains, as their moors marched with our small one somewhere near the top. Shanbally belongs to Lady Beatrice Pole-Carew and her sister, Lady Constance Butler, and Beasie's husband, General Sir Reginald Pole-Carew, and her father, Lord Ormonde, ran the shoot between them. Lord Ormonde had a great dislike for any luxuries, but Beasie insisted on having the most excellent mutton broth and hot stews and things at the lunches out on the hills. It used to amuse us frightfully to see Lord Ormonde's two old yachting friends whom he had invited trying to hurry forward when they saw the lunch laid out, and striving their best to sit near Beasie and as far away from their host as possible, as they loved having all the good food, and knew he would grumble and call for something cold, expecting them to do the same.

General Polly used to get a rise out of his father-in-law the first evening of the party by saying, "Well, I suppose we shall wear tails and white ties to-night," to which Lord Ormonde would thunder forth, "Oh no, no, no, there are no ladies, quite unnecessary!" General Polly would say, "No ladies—what about Beasie and Constance?" More thunder. "Nonsense, they're not ladies." "Well, what about Lady Clodagh?" Lord Ormonde, having known me since I was a baby, looked on this as the most monstrous idea. "Good gracious! she isn't a lady," so dinner jackets and black ties it had to be. The thing that really struck terror into our souls was when he was shooting

woodcock. He used to get so excited he would swing right round and fire into the brown. Beasie, Constance, and I have often simply hurled ourselves on to the ground only just in time. He always wore a tam-o'-shanter on his head with a large red bobble on the top and red tops to his stockings to show where he was and prevent people from shooting him, but I don't think that any amount of red tam-o'-shanters would have saved us when a woodcock went back.

He was such a dear, and used to tell me marvellous stories of the old days in Ireland, of how an old Lord and Lady Clancarty had had a very countrified son called Lord Dunlo. He would not take any interest in anything but local affairs, so they decided to send him on a trip round the world for a year to broaden his mind. When he returned they were all very anxious to greet him, and they poured question after question at him as to what he had seen, etc., but he looked rather bewildered, so his father bade them stop bothering him and said quietly, "Now, Dunlo, tell me what was the best thing you saw in your travels," upon which he smiled and said, "I saw a grand little ass when I was coming out from Ballinasloe," the latter place being their nearest town and station. After that they gave up and let him be as happy and as countrified as he liked. Lord Ormonde also told me a wonderful tale of some fancy dress dance in Clonmel. The roads were so bad in his youth that the chaise would often get bogged up, and this time the country people were amazed to see Henry VIII running along at the side of the road followed by all his wives in full dress.

Another coach tipped over and upset some local ladies into a bog, and when the coachman managed to pick himself up and come to their rescue, he heard

a muffled voice from below saying, " John, John, pull me out ; mine are the red legs, John."

There is a very well-known monastery called Mount Melary not far from where we lived. It was right in the heart of the mountains behind Cappoquin, and the monks had reclaimed all the land round and made it very fertile. They were a silent Order, but there was always one who was allowed to speak and showed one round. Claud once went down to Cork in the train with an elderly man dressed rather like a priest ; he seemed bursting with conversation, but some of the questions he asked were so extraordinary that Claud began to think he must be an escaped lunatic. He asked if Queen Victoria was still alive and spoke enthusiastically of Kruger, but said he was rather afraid that there might be a war in South Africa if things didn't settle down out there, and dozens of other similar remarks. At last he confided to Claud that he hadn't heard much news lately, as he had been a Trappist monk for fifty years. The most amusing part was that the Melary monks wanted to fix up some business matter with a firm in Cork, and had chosen this innocent old man after all those years of silence to go down and make the bargain, in which I cannot think they were well advised. As we were on the high-road between Lismore and Fermoy we used to get a good many tramps. One of these was most persistent. His name was Michael Burke, and he was a great friend of mine. I am afraid his character was not very good among the owners of dogs, as he could no more help stealing any dog he saw than a mouse could refrain from eating cheese.

Michael got into a bit of trouble up in Dublin once over a dog, and wrote asking if I would pay for a solici-

tor to see after his case. I was so amused that I said if he could find one who would take on anything so hopeless he was certainly to do so, so the next thing I got was a pained letter from the disillusioned legal man saying that he was afraid I must be grossly deceived in this man Burke, as after a week's remand the police had produced a list of crimes and convictions from every county in Ireland. He said it had positively shocked him. I wrote back and reassured him, saying that I had a slight suspicion once in a while that Michael was not absolutely perfect, and so the shock was not quite so shattering to my system as it had been to his. After that he cheered up, and just tried to get the prisoner as light a sentence as possible. While Michael was in prison he wrote to tell me that he had made friends with a nice murderer, and would I stop the latter from being hung. Another time I got a letter saying, "The Sergeant of police at Tallow is very hard on tramps. Will your Ladyship please have him removed." I answered that I thought it would be less trouble for all of us if tramps kept away from Tallow.

Certainly some people seem to have had a most touching belief in our powers as a family. One woman wrote, when my brother succeeded at the age of twenty, "We know that Lord Waterford will do all that's best for us in both Lords and Commons," which seemed a little optimistic to me.

People do ask for the funniest things. One woman wrote that she had a baby three months old, and she would be very grateful for some of Miss Clodagh's "casted clothes" for her. As Clodagh was a very tall child of twelve, at the time I could not think they would be a very good fit. Another woman wrote to a relation of mine who had just lost her husband, saying she

would be very grateful for some of her clothes now that she was in mourning and would not need them, and that she was particularly short of underclothes, evidently thinking that the widow was going to do it thoroughly, even to wearing a black chemise.

Lismore was a great place for anonymous letters. One of our neighbours had lovely red hair, but it was getting grey, and just at the moment passing through a rather ugly pepper and salt stage. Somebody wrote to her saying, "The way you dye your hair annoys the grocer in Church very much." I think it was meant to put her off going to that grocer's shop by making mischief, but it failed in its object, as all she said was that no grocer in the world could be more annoyed about the colour her hair was at the moment than she was herself.

Somebody else had a pash for Claud, and used to write him marvellous anonymous love letters saying, "You are so dark and so magnetic." He seems to have been a great success with all the local ladies. One time Miss Henny Ussher, our nearest neighbour and great friend, was travelling in the train, when a farmer's wife got in. The latter had evidently been making merry, but was in a benign mood, praising me up and adding thickly, "And she have a nice quiet man in Mr. Anson. He doesn't drink, he doesn't drink, and that's the whole of it," upon which she dropped off into a little doze for the rest of the journey. It was this same old lady who remarked, "Lady Anson—she's a grand lady—she's as plain as me-self!!"

There was always great excitement at Whitsuntide in Lismore, as the old Duke and Duchess of Devonshire came over there for three weeks and had big house-parties. The old Duchess could be rather alarming if

she was annoyed, but luckily for me she had been very fond of my mother, and so was always specially kind to me. She used to come up to Ballysaggart, and was always very worried over our happy-go-lucky ways, pointing out to me the bits of the house which seemed to be falling to pieces. She and the Duke simply adored each other, and were too touching and charming together. He was such a darling, too, but not a very tidy eater. He always would tip his plate towards him when he wanted to spoon up the juice, and so upset it all down his front. I was generally put next him at the dinner-parties, and at that time, my children being young, I was so accustomed to mopping up the things they upset that I would forget and start dabbing with my napkin, scolding all the time, "Now, why don't you look what you are doing?" etc., all of which he took very meekly, and seemed grateful for my assistance.

Our groom, Wood, had a great reverence for the Devonshire family, and was bitterly ashamed one day when I was driving the old dog-cart up the hill by the Castle with an untidy bundle of washing in the back : we met the Duchess with some of her house-party, and Wood threw himself upon the washing, trying to hide it up. The Duchess called to me to get out and come with them down to the river, but to Wood's great mortification I said, "I can't, Duchess. I've got to take the washing up to the laundry!" She waved that away, saying, "Never mind your washing. The man can do that," so I had to get out and leave Wood to drive off still blushing deeply at being caught with anything so vulgar as the week's washing.

After the old Duke died I used to go and see the Duchess in London, and she would talk and talk about him. She said, "He never said an unkind word to me ;

that is nothing, because we loved each other, but he never said or thought anything in all his life that was not kind and good."

We were exceptionally lucky in having charming people at the Castle both then and later, as after the old Duke died he was succeeded by his nephew Victor Cavendish, and he and his wife and family used to be at Lismore for the salmon fishing every spring, which was very nice for everybody round. They had lots of delightful children, and their arrival caused great doings and stir in the country-side. The new Duchess had been Lady Evelyn Fitzmaurice, so was a sort of connection of mine—her uncle (the Duke of Abercorn) having married my aunt, her sister having married my brother, and I having married her first cousin—all very complicated—so our children were never quite sure whether she or I was an aunt or a cousin of theirs. The whole family and their guests used to go for a long walk through the woods on Sunday afternoon, and generally end at Ballysaggart for tea. As they were getting near our boundary they would suddenly think that they should give some warning of their approach, and we could hear a distant chant which came floating through the woods: "We are coming to tea." I rushed round cutting up bread and butter and opening pots of jam before this hungry horde arrived. They certainly were the most pleasant and amusing family. The Duchess has a marvellous sense of humour, besides being very attractive to look at, which you cannot say for all Duchesses.

CHAPTER VII

MY brother Tyrone died in December 1911. He was walking home in the gathering darkness that evening from the Kilmacthomas Lodge, where they were cutting down some timber. Instead of keeping to the carriage drive he came back by a path which ran along the edge of the Clodagh river. There had been a terrific gale the night before—lots of branches were floating on the water and leaves blown about into heaps. One big tree standing half in and half out of the river caused the little footpath to take quite a big bend outwards, but the leaves on the top of the water made it look as if there was a firm path on the river-side. Tyrone was evidently striding along in the dusk, thinking of other things, and chose the wrong side of the tree, his foot going suddenly through the treacherous leaves, and though it was not deep in that place, he must have fallen forward into the river, his head striking a large floating branch. This stunned him, and as he lay face downwards the weight of his body slowly submerged the branch and he was drowned.

When he did not come in for dinner the household became alarmed and started looking for him, but it was not till daylight the next morning that he was found. His wife had come over to do some shopping for Christmas and was only up for the day in London, so that no one knew where to find her. I was staying with Susan at her house in Gloucester Place, and we had just finished breakfast when the front-door bell rang. To my surprise old Lord Bessborough stood on the door-

step, looking very upset. The Bessboroughs were near neighbours of ours at Curraghmore, and of course the two families saw a lot of each other in Ireland, but as Lord Bessborough was a very busy man, I could not think what he wanted with us at ten o'clock in the morning. Afterwards we found that in their endeavour to find Bertie they remembered her mentioning that she intended to fetch something from the house in Cavendish Square, and they hoped that by chance Lady Bessborough might know where to get hold of her, so they telephoned through to Cavendish Square, telling the sad news, and imploring someone to find my sister-in-law.

Anyhow, Lord Bessborough thought it best to come straight round to us, so he said : " Tyrone has had an accident," and I knew by his voice that he was dead. We were so terrified that the news would get through to the Press, and that Bertie might come out of a shop and see a poster with " Death of the Marquess of Waterford " in large letters on it, that we both rushed off in different directions trying to find her. Susan was able to trace her at some shop, and learnt that she had just gone on to Cavendish Square, so followed quickly, and when the butler said that Lady Waterford had just that moment arrived, she rushed past him and up to the drawing-room. Lady Bessborough was very short-sighted and frightfully upset at having to break the news, so when she saw some strange woman, as she thought, rush into the room, she cried : " Go away—go away." However, by then Bertie realized that something awful had happened, so put out her hand towards Susan, who came over to her, and Lady Bessborough realized with great relief who it was. My nephew Tyrone was a small boy of ten at a private

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school at that time. We telephoned to the master to bring him up, and he went over to Ireland that evening. When his mother met him at the station he had two little sticky sweets in a bit of paper. He slipped one into Bertie's hand, after they had kissed each other, and whispered, "Suck this, Mother—it'll be a comfort to you." So she did, and she said it was a comfort. He sucked the other one, and they held hands, but didn't speak.

Susan and I stayed behind to get anything that was wanted, and followed the next evening for the funeral. Uncle Charlie and Uncle Marcus came over for it, too, and they were frightfully sad, but of course even so they could not help being amusing. As a family we never could realize that any of us were really dead. We felt that they were somewhere about, and at every funeral at Curraghmore the whole lot of brothers seemed present somehow, full of life and fun and chaff. I think the most extraordinary funeral was Aunt Lily Marlborough's. She had married Uncle Bill and was buried at Curraghmore beside him. By her wish she was cremated first, but as they had got a magnificent coffin they thought it a pity not to use it, so they put the little urn full of ashes inside and sent it over to Ireland like that. Aunt Lily was a very large woman, so the coffin really was an enormous one. It was brought to Clonegam Church, and when the men who were going to carry it to the grave prepared to pick it up, you could see that they expected it to be very heavy, so when the signal was given to lift it up they put forth all their strength and the empty coffin shot up into the air in the most disconcerting way. There happened to be an American relation of Aunt Lily's first husband, Mr. Hammersley, over in England at that time, and

he thought he ought to attend the funeral. He stayed at Curraghmore for it, and they showed him round, persuading him to stay on another day as he seemed to appreciate it all so much. Mr. Hammersley had left all his money away from the family to his young wife, so his relations were not filled with any great devotion towards her. This member of the family, not being actuated by any personal sorrow, forgot the sad occasion of his coming and kept on assuring my brother that he never had enjoyed any visit so much in his life.

After Uncle Bill married Lily, Duchess of Marlborough, they lived at Deepdene, Dorking, and we used to do down there very often for the week-end, as Bill drove the Dorking coach down from London nearly every Saturday. Winston Churchill, who was a nephew of Aunt Lily's second husband, the old Duke of Marlborough, was often there, too, in those days. He was a soldier then and very good company, but rather inclined to be bumptious and conceited about his brains, and certainly he had something to be conceited about, but it did not make him popular. I think it is very difficult for a young man to be brilliantly clever without being rather aggressive, and elderly men resent being argued with and put in their place. Perhaps clever men get a bit toned down when they are older, or else people tolerate it better in a middle-aged man. I remember in the South African War people said very ill-natured things about Winston Churchill, particularly when he was taken prisoner by the Boers and escaped—plainly hinting that they didn't wonder at his being allowed to do so—and others inventing wondrous tales of how the Boers had implored him with tears in their eyes *to go right away as quickly as possible!*

However, I don't think that anyone could stay bumptious long with Uncle Bill. Though he was so charming and kind, he had a way of wittily picking the conceit out of anyone like the ribs out of an umbrella, and certainly he had a very good effect on Winston, who was always charming when staying there and most amusing. He said that as Uncle Bill was our uncle and his uncle too, we must be cousins—which we stoutly denied. I remember there being a hymn sung in church beginning,

“ All things bright and beautiful,
All creatures great and small,”

and we parodied it for his benefit, singing with great sarcasm the last two lines :

“ But cousin Winston Churchill
Is the most beautiful of them all.”

However, I expect he scored off us in the end—he generally did.

Uncle Bill had two pieces of Irish poetry which he loved : one was a description of politics and religion in Ireland, which was an absolutely true picture of it in a few words :

“ Fighting like divils for conciliation,
And hating one another for the love of God.”

And the other was a charming poem about an Irish party :

“ There was lashions of Punch—and wine for the ladies,
Pitaties and cakes—and bacon—and tay—
And Nolans—and Dolans—and Pats and O'Gradys—
All courting the ladies and dancing away.”

Sometimes the Beresford family quarrelled, but it did not last long. One time Susan and I had a row with Uncle Charlie over a family wedding. We sent each other rude messages, but did not actually meet. It was the year before the War, and in May 1914, when I was in London, Beasie Pole-Carew asked Claud and me to lunch. We got a mysterious message that after all it was to be at one o'clock, so arrived at that time. Beasie said, "I hope you don't mind, but Lord Charlie Beresford is coming, and he said he must have it at one o'clock because of going to the House of Commons" (he was M.P. for Portsmouth at that time). I told her that we had quarrelled, and suggested going away in case of it being embarrassing for the party, but she said, "Oh, no—I told Lord Charlie that you were coming to lunch, and he asked at once if he could come too." Of course, after getting us all there by one o'clock, he was half an hour late himself, but when he came into the room he paid no attention to anyone, just came up to me, threw his arms round my neck, saying, "My darling little Clodagh," and gave me a huge hug that lasted for minutes, weaving up and down. When he had finished he said "How-d'ye-do" to all the other people.

One of the guests was very thrilled at meeting him—she came up to me smiling and saying in a sentimental voice: "Your uncle evidently adores you, I can see." So I couldn't help saying, "Well, as a matter of fact, at this moment we are not on speaking terms."

Whenever Susan and I met Uncle Marky he always said in front of a large crowd of people, "Well, are you still living with Sams?" which gave a very improper impression of our private lives to the assembled multitude—but in point of fact he was alluding to a flat in North Audley Street which Susan took at the

time of my wedding and lived in afterwards till she married herself. It was over a milk shop belonging to an awfully nice man of that name, who is still there. Clodagh was born in the flat, and Mr. Sams took a great interest in her, and was very kind about putting down mats for his milk churns so as not to make a noise in the early morning. It was so like the uncles not to have gathered that we had moved on from that address years ago, though we never knew why Marcus fixed on that particular abode to remember above all others.

Claud used to go off to Texas every winter, and I generally took the children to stay around with friends and relations at Badminton, Stoke, etc., and also in London with Susan and with my mother-in-law, whom I christened Aunt Etta, as she did not like me to call her Lady Lichfield. Having already adopted Aunt Maud Lansdowne and Aunt Tiny Buccleuch, I thought I had better adopt her as an aunt too.

We were great friends, and she was always charming to me. She was very delicate and hardly ever went out, so I used to help her with her letters, and we had great talks together. Her youngest son, Alfred, lived with her at 18 Manchester Square, and he was the apple of her eye, which, I think, rather annoyed some of his brothers and sisters, but I loved him and found him most amusing.

Aunt Etta used to get very easily fussed about things, and I tried to think of all sorts of ways of soothing her. One time Alfred went off for a trip to South America, and his mother was quite distracted, making sure he would be drowned, so I told her that there were things called the Trade Winds, and that when his ship got past the Canary Islands it would get into these and be

wafted quite smoothly out to Buenos Aires. I added that on the way home the ships took a higher route, where the winds blew the other way to bring them back. It made her perfectly happy, and I really believe there are winds that do something of the sort, more or less, so they were a great comfort to us all. I threatened all the family with instant death if they should throw any doubt on my tale, and after that this astonishing phenomenon was always alluded to as "Clodagh's Trade Winds" !

In June 1914 we went to stay at Englemere with Lord and Lady Roberts for Ascot, and it was the last time we were all together. Susan and Hugh were there, and Lord and Lady Rawlinson, the Henry Wilsons, and all the old lot. It was great fun and also very interesting, as of course one heard all the inside chat about the Army and everything that was going on. Lord Roberts was so certain that the Germans meant to go to war and felt frantic about the insane reduction of all the forces and guns, etc. People may try now to make out that the Germans had no intention of bringing on a war, but how do they account for the fact that no two Prussian officers ever met together without ending with the toast of "Der Tag," and why was it that the Kaiser invited the War Minister, Lord Haldane, to the manœuvres a short time before the war commenced, and gave instructions for a couple of machine guns to be attached to each regiment? I was told that when Lord Haldane spoke of this to him, he said they had come to the conclusion that they would be useless, and that they were all to be done away with soon, and Lord Haldane believed it. But when the war started, all the machine guns belonging to the regiments were there ready, and made havoc among our unfortunate troops.

No one would pay any attention to Lord Roberts's warnings—he was like a man crying in the wilderness—they thought him besotted on the subject, and people used to take me aside and say it was a pity that poor old "Bobs" was making such a fool of himself over the Germans, yet who can doubt that if Lord Roberts's advice had been taken, and the Army been prepared, the Germans would have hesitated long before stirring up a war, and the whole feeling might have gradually died down again like it had done before, at the time of the Dogger Bank and other incidents? for I am sure that wars are never inevitable, and however much the strain may be at the time, countries will find a way out if they know the other side is too formidable to take on. The Roberts's took us over to Aldershot for a big Tattoo they were having in Ascot week. We went to General Haig's house, and had supper there after. I remember being told that Haig was the coming man, and would probably be Commander-in-Chief some day, but we little thought how soon that would be then.

We were by the sea at Ardmore when war was declared, and at first it was very difficult to know what was happening or to gather any news. Hugh Dawnay, who had been transferred to the 2nd Life Guards as a Major, was one of those chosen to go in the composite regiment of Horse Guards—among the first lot that went to France. He was soon put on the staff and did very useful work. The Duke of Westminster, who had been playing polo near Biarritz, I think it was, came straight up in his car when the expeditionary force landed and offered himself for use to headquarters, so he was handed over to Hugh, car and all, and drove him up and down the line with all the despatches and things they had to take and do. They had been at Eton

together, and Hugh said it was marvellous to have him, always cheerful, never tired, ready at any time for anything, the perfect chauffeur and companion.

In October the three Household Brigade Regiments had gone out to the front too, and about the end of that month the Colonel of the 2nd Life Guards was badly wounded and had to go home, so Hugh thought it was his duty to go back to the Regiment as Colonel, and he had not been with them long before he was killed, on November 6th (1914). They had attacked and driven the enemy back near Zonnebeke. In those days the trenches were not very deep, and Hugh just threw himself down in the trench they had captured, laughing and saying, "What a life!" when he was hit by a single shot, which was followed by such a rain of bullets that it drove the whole party back. They could see Hugh lying there, but could not get at him, though several men volunteered, as he had the regimental diary on him as well as his own, and they didn't want the enemy to get this. But each volunteer was killed in turn, so the commanding officer forbade anybody else to go until just before dawn, as there generally was a lull at that time. In the night there was a very heavy bombardment, and when they prepared to go over to get the body they saw that it was gone. For a long time they thought that the Germans had taken him away. I think my sister hoped on till the end of the war that he might only have been wounded and was in some hospital, but no trace of him was ever found until a few years ago, when they discovered his remains buried deep by some shell below the place where he had died. It was a great tragedy not only for all his relations and friends, but for England and the Army, as he had a brilliant brain, and would have

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risen to the top of the tree. He was a brave and gallant man.

In three weeks we lost three of our dearest friends : Lord Charles Fitzmaurice, October 30th ; Hugh Dawnay, November 6th ; and Lord Roberts himself on November 14th. He had been so wonderful at the time of Hugh's death. Susan was staying at Englemere, but was away for the day when the news came through, and Lord Roberts said at once that she must not go back alone to her little house at Windsor, so sent his car over for the children, and had them all settled in at Englemere by the time she got back and heard of the dreadful tragedy. In this way she was able to sympathize with and help to comfort them in their grief over Lord Roberts's death the following week.

When one looks back on the war it seems a funny jumble of sad and funny things mixed up with inconveniences. When the food cards came in we found ourselves left to starve when we came over, as there were none of these in Ireland, so we had to live on " offal " or ham on this side. The only thing that was rationed with us was sugar, and of course the bread was perfectly uneatable, full of grits and buttons and black beetles, but we could have as much butter and meat as we liked. Why does one always long for things one cannot have ? I never had liked sweets, or eaten any for years before the war, but as they were impossible to get I simply yearned for them. No small child with a sugar stick would have been safe ; I should have unblushingly knocked it down and taken its sweetie away. Luckily, the child found it as difficult to get its sugar stick as I did, which saved it from being molested. How impossible it was to get a taxi, too. I remember going up to one in Lowndes Square. The

driver was doing something to the machinery, and I thought he might get it right and take me, though I was rather nervous of suggesting it, as I wanted to go down to the Old Kent Road to see Zilpha, who was married by then and living there. I said ingratiatingly : " I suppose you couldn't take me in your taxi ? "

He looked up and enquired cautiously where I wanted to go.

" Well," I said, hesitating, " it is rather a long way."

This confirmed his worst suspicions. " Where to ? " he said.

And when I meekly told him it was the Old Kent Road, all he said was, " Now, lady, be reasonable," and went back to his work on the machine.

There were lots of new troops being trained near us in Ireland, and one met the most comical little officer boys, thrilled over their uniforms, and having huge successes with all the girls. I was travelling down to Cork one day, and just as the train was starting from Mallow Junction a perfectly strange boy hurled himself into my carriage, threw himself down on the seat opposite me and said : " I had a letter from my mother this morning—she did give me Hell." He then told me all his most intimate affairs, and when we parted at Cork Station he called back to me, " I'll write and tell you how I get on," regardless of the fact that he had been so busy telling me about himself that he had never bothered to know who I was or where I lived. Poor little chap, he went out to the front two weeks later and was killed before he had been there ten days.

No one could possibly believe the depth of ignorance among most of the Irish people over the war. Claud and I were doing the S.S.F.A. work in Lismore. One day a woman of about forty came up to Ballysaggart

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about the pension which was due to her on account of her son having been killed in France. It was rather a complicated case, so I asked her to wait until Claud came in, as it was more in his department than mine. I was lying out on the verandah, having sprained my ankle, so she pulled up a chair and sat talking to me while she waited. I had come back from London a short time before, and been through a lot of air-raids, so I described these to her, thinking it a good thing that she should know what English people were going through. She seemed a little puzzled, and at last asked me if it was the English that were bombing London? I said no, that the English lived in London, and that it was the Germans who flew over and dropped bombs, and added: "You see, it is the English who are fighting against the Germans."

She looked awfully surprised and said, "Oh! is it the Germans? I thought it was the English we were fighting," and that woman's only son was in the Army and had been killed at the front.

What with the S.S.F.A. and the sphagnum moss depot, Red Cross fêtes, committees, etc., we were kept very busy, but on top of everything we had a whole lot of Belgian families landed on us. I never shall forget my agony on the day they were to come. The station was packed with people, and crowds lined the route all the way to the old college buildings, where they were to live. I had been chosen to receive them, as I was supposed to be able to talk French. I just prayed that they would all be annihilated in a railway accident or abducted by brigands or anything to stop their arriving, as I knew that I should forget every word of the language when the awful moment came. The train came slowly in, and I felt sick and rooted to

the spot. All the carriages were searched, but nothing the least like a Belgian could be found. I breathed again. The crowd dispersed, thinking that they had lost the train, and would come by the next one from Mallow at about six o'clock. I thought to myself, they are coming the other way by Waterford, but I said nothing, and drove off, doubling back again half an hour later in time for the Waterford train. The station was empty, the Belgians arrived, and, as there was no audience, I managed to make them understand, wafted them down to the college, and got them all settled in before anyone grasped the fact. Two families talked French and two Flemish, so it was not too easy, but I got to know them so well that we managed to understand each other after a bit. The chief difficulty was when they all fought and sent for me to judge between them. Rude remarks in Flemish were quite beyond me, and I was not even very good at abuse in French. In any case, the whole affair sounded to me more like a dog fight than a civilized conversation.

I happened to be in London for a good many air-raids. They affected me like a thunderstorm—not frightening exactly, but giving one a headache and being a frightful nuisance. The part that bored me most was the way people always insisted on all the inmates of the house getting out of their perfectly good beds and sitting shivering on the stairs in acute discomfort. My theory has always been that if one has to die, it is much better to do it comfortably, and I see no point in getting out of a warm bed and sitting on a hard step with the edge of the stair above running into your back. If one of the bombs did hit the house, nothing could save you, wherever you were, so why catch a chill as well? I remember one of the daylight raids, when

I was cleaning up a flat in Hans Crescent which we were going to take for a couple of months. The warning maroons went off, and as if by magic every single vehicle in the street disappeared. A few minutes after, when I came out to go back to Lowndes Street where I was staying, there was not one living creature to be seen. It was like a city of the dead. I could hear the noise of the big Gotha engines in the distance, and our guns firing at them, but otherwise there was a deathly stillness as I walked down the middle of the street, apparently alone in London.

At that time all the girls from the big shops used to go straight on to various depots two or three nights a week and work at dressings and bandages till about ten-thirty, so various people organized entertainments on a small scale to keep them awake and amused while they were working. Clodagh and I got roped in to do a small sketch that I had written and performed at various shows in Ireland. It was called "Mrs. Murphy's First Visit to London," and I was Mrs. Murphy, dressed up in the most awful bonnet and dolman, elastic-sided boots, black cotton gloves with twisted ends to the fingers, and a huge gamp of an umbrella, all of which outfit I had had great difficulty in collecting. Clodagh was supposed to be my daughter, far more up to date than I was, and very much ashamed of my countrified behaviour. It took about twenty minutes to do, and seemed to amuse them a good deal. There was one depot near Chesham Place where they were working on three floors of the house, so we had to do our piece three times. It was rather difficult, as there was no stage, and we had to go through all the workers to get to the small place that was cleared for the performance. We thought the best way to get the

sketch over was to come in from the door as Mrs. Murphy and her daughter, so I leant heavily on Clodagh's arm and hobbled through the room grumbling and complaining about my poor feet, etc., and I did the same on my way out. It was quite a success on each floor, but a friend of mine who was there overheard one of the girls say as I went out, "And they tell me she's a real lady," upon which there was a chorus of scorn from the others. "Go on," they said, which I took as a great compliment to my acting.

Someone was to sing to them after our little play, so when we had done our third turn we took off our disguises and came back to hear the music. I still had my old frock on, and so they recognized me. After that, whenever I went in to shop at Harvey Nichols, Woollands, or any of those shops, I used to be greeted with broad grins by all the assistants, and I remained "Mrs. Murphy" to them for a long time. There was a big harvest moon the night we did the sketch, and the following evening at the same time there was an air-raid and a bomb fell into the area of this house. Luckily the girls were not working there then, as it blew in the windows and must have killed some of them.

I think the most thrilling raid that I saw was one in the country. I was staying with Mrs. Birch at Waltham, near Canterbury, and we went out into the fields and saw the whole thing. Somehow it is not so frightening away from a town. Even when you hear bombs dropping you feel that it would be very bad luck if they hit you, or the little cottage, and at the same time you do not have the awful feeling that somebody else must be blown to bits each time a bomb falls like you do in London. It certainly was marvellous to see

all the aeroplanes from Wye rising up to meet the Gothas, dropping Verey signal lights, and the flashes of battle going on over our heads in the air. The only tiresome part was the knowledge that we should have them back again two or three hours later on their way home, and when they took to coming over at intervals of two hours all through the night it made sleep rather out of the question.

Major Birch, who had been in the Army before he married, volunteered at the first outbreak of war and helped to form a Battalion of the Buffs. I believe that when they started training he and a sergeant were the only regular soldiers in the whole of this regiment, but they did very well. It was over Major Birch that the Pensions Office outdid themselves and wrote a famous letter saying that " though they admitted that the loss of sight in his eye had been aggravated by the war, they contended that now the war was over the aggravation had ceased ! " which was sufficiently amusing, even if the facts of the case had not been that he was blown up and buried by a mine at the front, and that the explosion had burst the retina of the eye from the back, leaving no sign that one could notice, but making the eye completely blind. The Pensions Office did try to take away the small pension they gave for this, and it was only by the most strenuous efforts of influential people that they were induced to give it again, which shows how hopeless it must be for any friendless persons to try to get their rights.

The little house which Major and Mrs. Birch inhabit is made out of two labourers' cottages, and is the most comfortable place to stay in that anyone could imagine. They live the simple life and do all the work themselves, so there is no servant problem, and the

food is marvellous. The stove is so near the table that you can put your hand out and lift the potato saucepan off to help yourself from. So it is all deliciously hot and quite excellent. I stayed with them every year before the war, and there was a dear old woman called Mrs. Dod who lived in the farm next door. She had an uncle who was bedridden, and in the course of a very frank conversation Mrs. Dod explained to me about the difficulties of nursing him, so when I got back to London I searched for and bought a utensil much used in hospitals, and this I sent as a present to Mrs. Dod, and got much credit thereby. However, the following year when I went down there I heard that "Uncle" was deceased, and when I went to visit Mrs. Dod I found that my gift of china had been placed as an ornament in the forefront of the glass cabinet, where, Mrs. Dod told me, it was much admired ! She gave us a description of the behaviour of a neighbour's child when it was brought to tea, which was very dramatic. " ' I'll take another bread and butters,' sez he before any of us was served. I gave him that look," says Mrs. Dod.

I had no idea until my friends settled in Kent how many illegitimate children there were in that county, or how calmly these little lapses were taken. Nearly everywhere we went among the farm and labouring classes we were introduced with great pride to some charming little girl or boy by an obvious grandmother, who explained quite readily that it was the child of our Kate or Annie, " by the gentleman she was walking out with before she married Mr. Smith." In one way it is the greatest mercy that they don't mind, as instead of being pushed about and ill-treated, the child lives with its grandparents, and is made a great pet of. I don't know if this is the case in other counties, but I have

often heard a girl of this kind alluded to down there as "a Kent daughter."

It was Mrs. Birch who told me the following story about the King. Just before Major Birch's Battalion of the Buffs and several other regiments were to start for the front, there was a review at Aldershot or Salisbury Plain, to which King George came and took the salute at the march past. There was a little bunch of anxious, miserable wives who had come to see the last of their men, and they had found a place along a railing to the left of where the King was to stand. However, as he was riding up, some busy person came along and pushed the women a good way back behind a second railing. When the King was sitting on his horse at the saluting point and the march past was ready to start he looked round, and sending his equerry straight over to the wives asked them to come forward near to where he was, realizing out of the kindness of his heart what it meant to them. Though overjoyed to come nearer, they did not like to come too close, but he smiled at them so kindly and beckoned them on, saying, "You will see better from here." Mrs. Birch said that tears welled up into her eyes, and a sort of surge went up through all their hearts that this was the sort of King one could die for, because he cared and understood.

Though we had no food restrictions in Ireland during the war, we had plenty of submarines to make up. They were swarming thickly round the South Coast, and made their base in all sorts of wild coves along there, as they could always get any amount of petrol and food from the people, who were anti-English to a man. Sometimes we could see their periscopes from the cliffs, but they never shelled us at Ardmore, as they did not

want to annoy their friends, and might have hit them by mistake. Of course everyone knew about this, and we spent our time telling the Authorities in London, but oh no, they knew better, and refused to pay any attention or do anything about it. I don't suppose there would have been one-quarter of the ships sunk without this naval base of theirs, for they could not possibly have stayed out for months as they did without supplies, and the English Channel was not so easy to pass through.

My children were at school in England all through that dreadful time, and the six crossings a year for the holidays were a terrible anxiety. If I was with them myself I never was half as nervous, though what good I could have done I do not know, but somehow it was different to all die together than the awful thought of a child being shipwrecked and drowned with no one even to hold on to. I used to lie awake all night wondering and thinking, perhaps they are sinking now ; if the moon was shining, one felt they could not escape. After a bit they stopped us going by Rosslare and Fishguard, and we had to make a fearful journey right round by Kingstown, getting on to the day boat and sleeping on board, so as to cross the next morning. I used to collect school-children all along the line, starting out from Lismore with my own and about six more, and picking them up from station to station as we went along. We generally went up from Waterford by Wexford and Wicklow, and though I knew hardly anyone in that part of the country, little groups of children would be standing on the platform and anxious parents would look down the train as we steamed in, flying up to me with faces of relief when they saw my flock, introducing themselves, and begging me to take charge

of their offspring. It took us thirty-six hours to get to London.

We had all gone over by day in the *Leinster* at the end of September 1918, about a fortnight before she was torpedoed, and by that time one had grown to be rather philosophical over the submarine menace and lost one's fear of it. My cousin, Lady Phyllis Hamilton, was on board when the *Leinster* went down, and she was drowned. I went to see my aunt, Mary Abercorn, that afternoon, and she mentioned that Phyllis was crossing that day. When I got up to go she begged me to stay, as she said Phyllis should arrive any minute and would like to see me, so I sat on and on, and we could not understand why she did not arrive. In the end I said I had to go, and arranged to come back and see Phyllis on the following day. It seems to have taken everyone a long time to realize what had happened, even at Kingstown. My sister had been staying at Shelton Abbey, near Arklow, which belongs to Lord Wicklow, whose wife had been a younger daughter of my aunt's (she had died quite suddenly some years before). Susan and Phyllis left Shelton together that morning, and after seeing the latter off, my sister went on into Dublin to do some shopping. It took about half an hour by train, and she had no sooner got there than she saw a poster with "*Leinster* Torpedoed—coming in on her own steam." Susan's first thought was how excited Phyllis would be over it all, and she felt sure that she would long to be met at Kingstown and have someone to tell it all to, so back she went to Kingstown and down on to the pier, where quite a number of people had collected waiting for the steamer to come in. They told Susan that they had sent out a lot of tugs to help her in, in case she was

badly damaged and needed help, but nobody seemed to have any idea that the ship had gone down.

My sister said that she did not know quite when the feeling began to creep over them that all was not well. A few tugs came back, and in them perhaps half a dozen people. A few walked off unaided with frightful wounds and gashes, all bleeding ; others with no marks on them at all were carried off. Some had hardly any clothes on. Susan went on board the third tug that came in, thinking that Phyllis would be there, and found a woman stark naked lying on the floor of the cabin. No one knew what to do, and the people just lay about all wet and shivering. Susan and a strange man went along ringing the bells of all the little houses begging for blankets, and brought them back to put over the injured people. Then boats came back with a few dead bodies, and it slowly dawned on them all that no more would return alive ; more and more corpses came in, and the authorities converted some big picture gallery or school in Dublin into a temporary morgue. They laid them out close together in a square, with their heads along the walls, and when more came in made an inner square. There were three huge rooms, and they were all full. Susan said it was like the most gruesome nightmare going round searching for Phyllis's body in this vast mass of drowned people, and what made it even worse was that it was so terribly difficult to identify them. Their clothes were just like sodden brown paper that if you touched came away in your hand ; their hair was hanging down in a tangled mass, and there was no way of knowing whether they were first-class passengers or the poorest emigrants. All distinctions were washed away. Susan could not find Phyllis that first day, but

dozens of people were identifying their relations by some ring or marked characteristic and taking them away, when more bodies were brought in instead. She had to continue for three days her ghastly search. In the end she said it got so awful it almost ceased to matter. The bodies were so decomposed by the seawater that they were hardly human, and she lost the feeling that they ever could have been alive.

There is a large place called Glenart opposite Shelton which used to belong to Lord Carysfort, but as he died without an heir he left it to his sister's son. She had married Lord Claud Hamilton, but when their son succeeded to Glenart he had to take the Carysfort family name of Proby, though he could not succeed to the title, as it was through the female line. This Colonel Proby was among those searching for the bodies of their friends, as his wife's secretary had been on board the *Leinster*. Susan made friends with him, and she said she could not have lived through those fearful days without his sympathy and help. Poor Phyllis was never found, but Colonel Proby identified the secretary. By bad luck there happened to be a strike of undertakers going on in Dublin at the time, and when they found this poor girl, they had the most awful time trying to get her buried. If you think of it, you will realize how little the ordinary person knows about burials, and there was no one who would even make a coffin. They could not think how to lay her out or what she should be dressed in. So Susan bought a nightgown, and in the end got some nuns to help, finally getting her buried with the greatest difficulty.

CHAPTER VIII

ON looking back over the last thirteen years, the thing that strikes one most is the amazing way that one has forgotten about the wartime life. At first, the very fact of having white flour was a sort of wild excitement. Then to be able to get petrol and use the car was marvellous. We had been rationed in Ireland, and could only just get enough to drive into Lismore on three days a week for war work. Even then we had to put the motor straight into the hotel yard and walk the rest of the way to our various jobs. In consequence of this rationing all the committees and other war works had to be arranged on the three moss depot days.

Another thing which seemed very funny at first was to get out of the habit of asking everybody to bring a cake or buns—even tea or sugar—for any merry-making that took place. Even if one gave a party oneself, one almost expected the guests to bring their contribution of food, after the countless fêtes and sports, bazaars and jumble sales, which were the only forms of entertainment during the war years. In fact, the whole of one's life was suddenly left suspended in the air, like a daughter who has given up her time completely to looking after an invalid parent and, after many years, when that parent has passed away, suddenly looks round and wonders what there is to do. She has got out of all her habits, all her interests, and is left stranded without any particular reason for doing anything. I have known many of these during my life and noticed how some have just sunk back without any spirit into

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complete barnacle existence while others turned to and made a new life for themselves, becoming almost young again through the interest they took in others and keeping abreast of new ideas and doings. It was the same with the war. Lots of people who were leading rather dull lives without many friends or acquaintances suddenly found themselves busy with depots or hospitals, meeting quite a different lot of people, mixing with everyone of higher and lower social scales than themselves and, in spite of the truly human little jealousies and squabbles that are inevitable among any collection of folk, male or female, who are all working for the same object, these people really enjoyed every minute of the war, and frankly confessed that they missed it terribly when it was over and things had gone back to normal again.

However, to most of us, who were lucky enough to have fairly amusing lives in the ordinary way, the relief was marvellous, and we gladly finished up the committees and depots and threw ourselves once more into a less parochial world.

It has always seemed to me extraordinary how bits of one's life, which have been brought on artificially by some outside circumstance, suddenly shut down and end abruptly, almost being as if they never were. How often you may be staying in some house where a sudden joy or tragedy happens ! Before you know where you are, you are plunged up to the neck into the whole thing ; the sorrow or excitement is all yours too ; you find yourself doing and saying the most unlikely things, talking earnestly to perfect strangers, taking on emergency undertakings and interviews and, at the end, sitting back if all goes well, feeling that you have lived through years of thrilling adventure, or, in the case of

a tragedy coming away when no more can be done absolutely shattered and exhausted with grief and sympathy. Yet, if you had not happened to be there and seen it all, you would probably have said in a polite voice : " Poor things, how awful for them ! " when told casually about it.

Near the flat where I live there are particularly dangerous cross-roads, and after the policeman on point duty goes away at midnight there are a good many accidents there, so I am continually rushing out in the night, on hearing some frightful crash, to find motor-bicycles buried under milk lorries, and cars and charabancs in a tangled heap. There is no means of telephoning near, as there are only lock-up shops, or railings of gardens, so I generally have to 'phone for the ambulance required. One Sunday night, when I ran out at 1 a.m., I saw down the road a large charabanc full of sailors and, in the middle of the cross-roads, a very mangled-looking car filled with people. In the back were two women and an elderly man, with a girl on their knees ; one woman was unconscious, and had broken an arm and a rib ; the other seemed quite conscious, but had her face terribly cut. We pulled out the girl and the elderly man, who fainted from shock in the road, but did not like to move the others in case of doing injury to their broken bones. However, I went for some stuff to stem the bleeding and, in the end, tore up a whole sheet before the ambulance came. They asked for water, and, when I took some out, the unconscious woman came to slowly and took a glass. In the front of the car there were a man with concussion and a girl who had fallen out on to her head, but the driver was unhurt.

After the ambulance had taken away the two women at the back and the concussed man from the front of

the car, the driver went off to try to find a break-down lorry to move the car with, as it was smashed to bits and a danger to the traffic ; so, as it was a very cold night and the two girls and elderly man who had fainted were left stranded, they all came down to my flat, and we made some tea. They lived down in Sussex, and eventually went off home when the driver returned with a hired car about 4 a.m., but of course by that time I felt I had known them for years. Next day I went round to the various hospitals where the invalids had been taken in to find out how they were and telephone the news to their relations down in the country ; but the funny part was, that the woman whose face was so badly cut had no idea who I was or any recollection of what had happened until she found herself in the hospital ward, though I had talked to her for about ten minutes while we were waiting for the ambulance, whereas the other one, who had been unconscious, looked at me when I got to her bedside and said, " I have seen you before. Didn't you give me a glass of water once ? " Anyhow, I was luckily able to be of use in assuring one of the invalids as to her false teeth being safely put away in her daughter's bag, and making a list of what they wanted brought up to them, also various domestic details—about " putting Granny's visit off "—" ordering the fish," etc., all of which I wrote down and telephoned through. In this way one is suddenly plunged into other people's lives up to the smallest detail, and then, after they have recovered and been taken home, they go out of one's life as quickly as they came in, though in this case I had the most charming letter of thanks, and mean to motor down and see them some day.

Another time I went out on hearing a crash, and

found on one side a car overturned and entangled with the lamp-post, which it had broken off, and, on the other, a motor stuck up against the railings on the pavement. There was only one man in each car, and, when the lamp-post one crawled out, shaken but unhurt, the other man strode across the road in a blazing fury and cursed the life out of him, which I expect he richly deserved. It was a very cold night with an icy blast blowing, and I had only a dressing-gown and slippers on, so, when they continued to fight without cease and would not pay any attention to my repeatedly asking if they wanted to telephone, I left them to it and returned to bed, but I heard the warfare raging for a long time and, after it had abated, many unsuccessful efforts to raise the fallen car.

Sometimes one visits some relation or friend in nursing home or hospital, getting to know the door-keeper, the nurses, the other patients almost by their Christian names, and becoming on quite intimate terms with them all for the time being. Last year I spent seven weeks going daily to a hospital when my beloved Mrs. Wiz was so ill with appendicitis, and, in the end, one's whole life seemed to be bound up with theirs. I got to be a sort of institution, doing their commissions and messages, tidying their lockers, picking up the things that dropped ; even the nurses would say that they had to go to a lecture, and would I haul No. 5 and No. 9 out of bed and sit them by the fire, as they were to get up that evening ? There was one dear old lady whose false teeth I used to give to her and feed her with a spoon. I got to know all their relations who came to see them, and we greeted each other as long-lost cousins when we had to sit outside the ward waiting while some doctor was attending to a patient.

I nearly always went on the same bus every day, and the conductor got so worried over the consommé I used to take in a glass jam-jar with a piece of paper tied over the top that at last he asked me what it was. He said, "What have you got in that jar? Is it bait?" So I told him, "Yes; that I was going fishing for tiddlers in St. James's Park."

Then suddenly Mrs. Wiz got better, and we brought her home. She was carried round to say good-bye, and we were all quite gulpy at the parting, but even then did not realize that, when we moved her out, a whole bit of life was ended—stopped dead—like a clock. For a few days I almost found myself stepping on to the bus to go down to the hospital as usual, and then it all faded. What brought this most forcibly to my mind was going back to this same hospital the day before Christmas with fruit for the patients and chocolates for the nurses, and finding Sister there, but not one single nurse that we had known, and of course completely new patients. We looked round the ward, and could not believe that we had ever spent weeks of our life in that place. It looked absolutely strange and different.

After the war was over I suddenly realized that my children were beginning to grow up, and that, instead of my generation being the one that was doing the things, we were almost the old folks at home. It was an awful shock. Striking thirty is always rather a moment, but I had recovered from that blow, and still considered myself quite youthful, though I was thirty-five when the war started; but to wake up out of this nightmare and find oneself automatically aged thirty-nine was a most distressing jar.

However, I found that, if only you will let them do so, your children carry you along with them, and almost

renew your youth in the interests of their life. The craze then was dancing, and as Clodagh had to have someone to practise new steps with, she taught me, and I loved it far better than the old-fashioned way. The rhythm and the syncopation are so marvellously intoxicating. As I enjoyed dancing so much it was very lucky that there were so many regiments quartered in and near Fermoy and so few girls in our neighbourhood, so that, whenever I took down a party to the dances given by the soldiers, I did not have to sit on the bench doing the heavy chaperon, but could always dance as much as all the young ones.

When the bad times came on, and it got too dangerous for the men to be allowed out of camp or barracks at all, they used to implore me to bring down every girl I could collect and come to any little impromptu dance they got up. So I would go round inviting all the maidens of the district, and bring them back to Ballysag to dine and dress; then drive the thirteen miles to Moore Park, hoping for the best—that neither the Sinn Feiners nor the British Army would catch us on the road, nobody being allowed out after dark by either side, and the fact of having a permit from the one to do so would only be a reason for the others to shoot. However, we didn't care, and always managed to get through safely, arriving home about five in the morning, and laying out our guests in a row to sleep until I could take them decorously home to their loving parents by daylight next afternoon. I never knew if the latter quite realized our dangers, but their daughters trusted to my being vague enough not to rouse much cross-questioning, and really they would have had the dullest time imaginable if I had not been brave enough to take the risk and responsibility. I had a feeling that

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some of the families really knew quite well, but would not admit it, even to themselves, and, as long as everything went well, deliberately ignored it ; but, if we had got caught and injured, or killed, they would have made the most frightful fuss and put the blame on me. However, this did not worry me ; I am all for living while you are alive, and, anyhow, I should probably have been killed too, so took a chance, as my custom is.

One early morning we got an awful shock on our way home. It was still pitch-dark and we were racing along between dense woods on either side of the road, when we suddenly saw in front of us, drawn across the road, an old-fashioned high dog-cart. The horse evidently was fast asleep, as it stood with its head hanging down, and inside were two human beings, hatless and leaning out on each side, apparently dead. We were sure it was an ambush, but had to stop, get out, and shake the man and woman to see if they were alive or not. We discovered that they were in a tipsy slumber, returning from a fair, and the horse, getting tired of looking after itself and them, had got bored and settled down for the night as well. About a mile farther on we saw their hats lying in the road where they had fallen off. But it certainly gave us a scare and was a very gruesome sight.

The boys and I got stuck in a railway strike at Fishguard one autumn. They were going back to school, and two or three other boys were travelling with us. We crossed over in the steamer, but when we got to the English side, we found that all the railway people had suddenly come out. There we were still on the boat, but the captain and crew went off, and only one steward remained. The Cork boat was also there, and

every now and then there were rumours, first that the train would start, then that the Cork steamer was going back ; so we never knew from minute to minute what was going to happen. The only food on board was a very pink underdone-looking ham, and this we ate at every meal without potatoes or even bread. We had let all the live chickens out of the coops, as they were starving, and these ran about the station picking up any food they could. There were a lot of unfortunate third-class passengers on board, coming back with dozens of children and babies from their week's holiday. They had only their return tickets, and scarcely a penny more between them, and the beastly people on the boat never attempted to give them any food. I saw one poor little family starving in a corner, and told the steward to give them a meal from me, but to be sure not to let out who had paid for it. However, they found out, and after that all the families used to come and starve under my nose, so I ran through all the money I had.

We never could go to bed, as the Cork boat people told us every evening that, if they decided to go, they would blow their whistle and start off in half an hour, and that anyone would be left behind who did not come on board before that time. So the boys just lay down and I sat up and listened for the signal. The third night it went off. I woke everyone up and we all trooped over to the Cork steamer, which was already quite full. They put me in front and all crowded behind, each carrying his own boxes and bags. The man on the boat tried to stop us getting on, saying we must pay for our tickets, which, of course, was impossible, as we had spent all our money. However, with great cunning I kept on stepping a little nearer to him as I argued,

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waving my hands about so that he had to back a bit, and, when there was enough room, the others squeezed by behind me on to the deck. When I saw that they were all on board I stopped arguing, and just said, "Well, here we are—you can throw us off if you like, but you will have to fight for it"; and, when he looked at our stalwart crowd, he went off grumbling, and left us to sit on our boxes. We wired from Cork for the motor to come for us, as there were no trains by then in Ireland either, and eventually got home after three days' and three nights' acute discomfort. I had never even taken my shoes off from the time I started, and when I did my feet were right through my stockings and coal black.

Before the times got too bad in Ireland we used to have all sorts of dances and parties at Ballysag, and I got a most amusing man up to help wait at the dinners and suppers we gave. He confided to me that at one time he had been a Trappist monk at Mount Melary, and his name there was Brother Aloysius. I should not think that there are many people who have had an unfrocked monk as a butler, but in that country anything may happen.

Not long ago my sister, who lives at Whitfield, near Waterford, had a marvellous old cook who used to make the most priceless remarks. Two murderers from Tipperary were taken up to be tried in Dublin, but the jury were frightened to convict them, as they were threatened with death if they did, so the men got off. There were great rejoicings over this, and a reception was got up to congratulate them on their return; but on the way down the motor they were driving in had a bad accident and they were both killed. When the cook heard this she said, "Ha! they thought they had got

off, did they? You make take in the judge and the jury, but you can't cod God!"

It was Susan's gardener who sent the original message to her about the battle which took place at Whitfield, when the Sinn Feiners fought the Republicans who were living in the house, and one on each side was killed: "We had a grand funeral for the two soldiers," he wrote. "They were buried together in a corner of the garden, the Sinn Feiners and Republicans walking side by side behind the coffins. I made a wreath for each, knowing it would be your ladyship's wish." He added as a postscript, "The antirrhinums growing in the border were greatly admired by all." This story went the rounds over here, and, months afterwards, I used to be told it by perfect strangers as having happened to themselves.

I remember arriving in Dublin one early morning and driving round the streets looking for somewhere to buy a toothbrush, which one of us had forgotten to bring. The Irish car driver took a great part in the proceedings, and recommended a chemist's shop; but, when we got there, though the door was open, there was only a very rough, stupid-looking girl scrubbing the doorstep. However, he got off and went up to her, saying, "Are yer a chemist?" She looked up, astonished, and said, "What?" He took her by the shoulder and repeated, "Are yer a chemist?" But she only looked at him vacantly and went on scrubbing. So he got mad and shook her up and down. "Don't yer know if ye're a chemist or not?" says he. But evidently she wasn't, as she jumped up, rushed indoors and slammed the door, leaving her pail and brush outside. So we had to do without a toothbrush that morning.

Even now that the Free State is supposed to be very proper and well run, funny little things happen all the time. My nephew was driving his car in Dublin, and, as he is rather inclined to be vague, he got himself inextricably mixed up with trams and lorries and cars—in fact, there was a regular hold-up in the street. One of the Civic Guard came up, looking very fierce and important, demanded his name, and began writing it all down in his notebook. Tyrone hunted about, and at last produced the licence, on which was written, "The Marquess of Waterford, Curraghmore, Portlaw." When the policeman saw this he felt homesick, having come from Waterford, so a foolish smile came over his face and he said, "Oh, laws ! I was often in Curraghmore meself." Then turning fiercely on the trams and assembled cars, he flew at them. "Now then—get on out of this, all crowding round here, hindering his lordship—get away with you." So they fled in every direction, leaving Tyrone and the force of the law, deep in reminiscences, in the middle of the street.

My nephew was married last October, and he and his wife went on a horse-caravan tour this summer. They meant to be quite incognito and unnoticed, but it got about, and for the first fifty miles they were received by a continuous crowd who lined the roads, giving them a great reception. Even when they got farther away into strange counties, a deputation would come running out from each village, asking breathlessly, "Is the circus coming, or is it the Marquess of Waterford ?" They said the people didn't seem to mind which it was.

My sister had this caravan habit too, but hers is a two-wheeled one, which is hitched on to the back of a motor. A few years ago she and a niece, Blanchie

Beresford, went off in this, taking Ronny Dawnay and his friend Dick Girouard with them. After many vicissitudes they arrived one evening on the edge of some glorious cliffs in Galway, and Blanchie, who is full of poetry and soul, declared that they must camp on the very edge so as to wake up next morning and see the sunrise over the sea. However, in the night a huge storm arose. The caravan was rocked backwards and forwards by the gale, the tent which the boys slept in got unhooked from the side of it, and their camp-beds collapsed into a large pool which had been blown in under the flap. A drenching mist was being driven across the sea, of which all that could be seen was an occasional angry breaker. Susan said it was very tiresome of the boys to let their beds fall into the pool and seemed put out about it—somewhat unreasonably—but to their great relief they found a really solid country house not far off, with a long-lost acquaintance living in it, so they retired gratefully into comfort—warm baths, real beds, and hot food—until the storm was abated. Blanchie and Dick Girouard got engaged after this trip, and I really believe that any marriage should be a success in which the parties concerned have managed to survive in health and temper through a caravan tour.

After the treaty was signed all the English soldiers came away from Ireland, so there were no more gaities or dances, and the only thing for the girls to do to amuse themselves was to ride and hunt and do a bit of horse coping—this became quite the fashion with them near Lismore—and they got amazingly handy at training young horses, doing all the grooming and stable work themselves. There is a story of Ursula Godfrey—Sir John and Lady Godfrey's youngest daughter—who

wanted to go cub-hunting one morning on her pony "Fish," which was out on grass in the Castle field amongst a lot of cows. It was so dark at 5 a.m. when she went to get him in that she could not see him, though she could just see the dark shadows of sleeping beasts in the field, so she went round striking matches into the faces of the astonished cows as they lay around. One of the Castle labourers who was passing down the road to his work, seeing these little spurts of flame and a dim figure moving about, thought that something shady was going on, so climbed over the wall and advanced towards Ursula. However, her explanation that she was "looking for fish in the field" did not convince him of her sanity!! He must have thought it a very "grotto-squee" form of amusement, as Hugo once remarked, having never heard the word "grotesque" pronounced.

Uncle Charlie Beresford died in September 1919. He was staying up in Scotland with the Duke and Duchess of Sutherland, and got a stroke, dying almost immediately. We were so thankful that he did not linger, as his life was so full, and he was so keen and thrilled about everything, it would have been too cruel. Uncle Marcus was the last to go; he died in his sleep in December 1922. It does not seem possible that all those brothers are gone. They were so unique both separately and together, crammed full of life and fun, and all making their mark in their own way. It is only a few years ago that Charlie Beresford was a household name; you could not have gone into any house or cottage in the British Isles without the inhabitants knowing all about him. Even now, among middle-aged people one has only to mention him, and they are almost your friends at once. Uncle Charlie always knew such interesting

people. I remember when Buffalo Bill was in London—he was a great friend of his—Charlie took us to the show, and afterwards Colonel Cody (which was Buffalo Bill's real name) showed us round behind the scenes, introducing us to the Red Indians, letting us drive round in the famous mail coach, and giving us a feast of popcorn, etc. Everyone was wild about this entertainment at that time, you could not get a seat for love or money; but Buffalo Bill used to let us go into his private box, so we saw it several times, and were frightfully proud when he rode up in the arena and talked to us during the performance. Nearly all the stories about Uncle Charlie are so well known that I will not repeat them, but I really think the classic telegram, "So sorry can't come—lie by post," is almost his best effort.

It was Uncle Markie who always declared that his mother had smacked him with the back of her hair-brush when he was a small boy, and that he still had her initials and coronet impressed on a part of his anatomy!

Another time, when Uncle Marcus was discussing some very important point about a race meeting at his Club, a rather boring Jew kept on coming up and bothering him about what dress he should wear at some big fancy-dress ball. At last Markie got so worried with these continual interruptions that he said, "If I were you I should put a paper frill round my neck and go as a ham."

However, it was their ordinary everyday, every-minute conversation that was so apt and to the point, so amazingly witty and funny, without any effort. They just saw everything that way. One would far rather go out or be with any of these than the most attrac-

tive young man on the earth. Marcus and I became specially great friends the last few years of his life. I had settled in London during the bad times, and he felt rather lonely after Uncle Charlie died, though it did not prevent him being just as amusing as ever. Marcus had been in the 7th Hussars, but racing was his mania, and he was official starter for a few years. He became extra equerry and manager of King Edward's thoroughbred stud and racehorses in 1890, and continued in the same capacity for King George, when he succeeded, till the day of his death.

CHAPTER IX

WHEN I first came over to live in London ten years ago during the bad times I rather missed all the odd jobs that I used to do in the country. I cannot remember any time in my life when I was not interested in people, particularly in the ones who were down on their luck—perhaps it was because Mother had so many friends of every class and kind who depended on her to get them out of scrapes and help them in time of need. Granny Beaufort used to chaff her about all her black-guard friends, but Mother said that as Granny looked after all the good people, it was her job to see after the naughty ones.

Perhaps I have inherited a little of Granny Beaufort's "cold zar," as I certainly seem to be very useful with drunkards. One day in the canteen a man turned up who had been drinking methylated spirits, and he was absolutely mad for the time being—raging round insulting all the down-and-outs who were peacefully having their dinner, throwing things about, and trying to wreck the place. I went up to him, and fixed him with a firm stare straight into his eyes, saying, "Come here," and keeping so that he could not take his eyes away from mine led him outside. "Now go away," I told him, and left him, shutting the door. He went quietly and never came back, but it is a very funny feeling—as if you were outside yourself. It is the sort of thing that never could be done to order or to show anybody. It just comes of itself when the occasion arises, and

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you have done it before you are conscious of any thought.

The canteen I spoke of was originally started with a lot of others for the unemployed after the War. I heard that workers were wanted for Christmas Day the first winter I came to live here, and as I do hate Christmas Day so terribly, I was glad of a chance to do something useful.

While I was there the organizer asked me if I would care to work regularly, and as by that time I had discovered that if you are not very rich and cannot send cheques to charities the only other good work there seems to be in London consists in standing about at completely empty bazaars selling half-dead bunches of flowers to non-existent friends, I was rather pleased with this idea, and started away merrily. Before this I had always treated London as a purely social place. You came up for the season and went out to dances, etc., every night, or you came up for shopping in the autumn or spring and went to a lot of plays. All one's philanthropic interests somehow seemed to be in the country—certainly there were blind beggars who sold matches, also organ-grinders, but beyond parting with an odd penny these seemed to be all the "poor" there were about. Now that I know more about it and all the problems of the homeless, I get very irritable with all the excellent people who are thinking just what I used to think then, which is most unfair. Certainly working in the canteen was a revelation, and at first I got so depressed that they all seemed alike, just as a pack of hounds does to anyone who has not got to know them separately. But gradually, as their personalities became revealed, I realized how utterly wrong I was. I got to understand the different classes among them.

The ones who bought a 5*d.* dinner were looked on as being, so to speak, "the smart set," having a small pension or a regular trade of some kind—pushing barrows in the markets or selling newspapers in the street, also heaps and heaps of weird occupations of which the ordinary person is quite unaware. Sometimes on good days these will have a 1*d.* plate of rice or a 1*d.* cup of coffee as well as their dinner.

Then there are the people who can only afford a 2*d.* soup and bread, with perhaps a 1*d.* rice to follow, and the ones who vary between the two classes from day to day according to the state of their trade. In point of appearance no one could tell to which of these classes they belong by looking at the men themselves, and this applies also to the completely down-and-out ones, who come with free tickets from the *Christian Herald* relief fund. Some of the latter are quite smartly dressed, clinging on to their best clothes to the last, knowing that the chance of a job depends almost completely on their being of decent and clean appearance. It is sad to watch them gradually *dégringolé*. I have known clerks and men with other bettermost jobs, who have come to the canteen when they have got stood off as a result of slackness of trade. They still have a little money left, but wisely hoard it as long as possible, and are delighted to find such cheap food, though perhaps rather amused to find themselves in such rough company. As time goes on, and all their money is used up, they gradually begin to look more and more pinched and worried. The starched collar goes, the shirt badly needs a wash. Now that he has had to sell the spare one, it isn't so easy to wash and dry it with nothing on in its place. So the collar goes altogether. Perhaps he has gone into the Salvation or Church Army

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to have a wash, and while he was washing his neck someone pinched it. The clothes themselves gradually become a little worn and ragged, and in the end you may recognize his face as just one among the other rough boys.

This is not one case. I have seen hundreds of them go down into the pit, and then people abuse me for getting distracted and trying to get them fixed up into jobs before they have gone too far. "My dear, why do you bother about all these boys? You only wear yourself out, and spend all your money, running yourself into debt. After all, they probably aren't a bit grateful." Good God! "grateful!" What is this mania for gratitude? Everybody's first question to me when I have told them living human dramas, probably all fresh in my mind from the night before, is always the same. "Are they grateful?" What is gratitude, anyhow? I don't believe such a thing exists. If someone you dislike does something for you, it worries you to death. You hear people say, "I wish they wouldn't. It's such a bore having to be grateful afterwards." Does anyone want gratitude that is a "bore" to the grateful? If you like someone and they do you a good turn, you go on liking them perhaps even better than before, perhaps not. Another question always asked is, "Do they repay what you lend them?" No, they don't. Nor does anyone of any class, if lent for the same sort of extremity as it would be to them. I don't mean the odd bob for a taxi fare where there is no shortage of coin; that is anything but temporary. But even in that case the borrowers have a habit of forgetting, particularly if they are well off. As a rule someone who has to think of shillings is more particular. But in the case of down-and-outs, I do not lend

money to them. My father taught me years ago a very wise maxim. He said, "If anyone asks you to lend them money, say no, but give them a half or a quarter, or whatever you can afford, as if people owe you money they avoid you, and dislike you, even though they never can or will pay it back. Therefore, as you never will get any money back anyhow, you might as well lose less and get some thanks." All of which I have found to be painfully true.

Nearly everyone I try to help says that they will pay me back, and I tell them, "Very well; if you want to pay me back, do it by behaving well, sticking to your job, being a success, and put up all the money you can spare into your own account in the Post Office Savings Bank, so that when evil times come again you are able to last out and get through without coming back to me for more help." Some of them do this, just a few fail; perhaps it's luck which does which. Everybody does not have the same chance, and, if you are born with a character that cannot concentrate and stick to one thing for long, who are we to judge and condemn? We all know people of our own class, sometimes of our own family, who are physically incapable of any sustained effort, and if they had not money left from their parents or relations to fall back on, where would they be?

I often ponder over the men and women I know and meet in Society, and wonder what would have become of them if they had not had fathers and mothers who paid for them to go into professions, put up money for partnerships in businesses, or had influence to get them started on some career. Oddly enough, it is not the clever hardworking ones who could make their way in the world in any capacity who are unsympathetic to my

poor waifs and strays as a rule, but for true scorn give me the utterly useless man or woman with no occupation, living on the earnings of ancestors, or at the other extreme the hard men who inherit a business and have worked it up by shrewd bargains with their clients and short shrift to their employees. They have never had any difficulty in finding a job or slaved away for other people. If they work hard, it is for their own benefit, and they expect other people to work as hard as they do for no benefit at all.

I am not a Socialist, for I consider the ideal of Socialism to be the direst form of tyranny. I always instil into my friends when I have managed to get a job for them that if they are wise they will offer to do little extra things, help their employers out in an emergency, be willing and obliging, for though this costs very little in time or energy, it pays a thousandfold. Human nature is the same everywhere, and if there is a question of having to do without one of two boys, the obliging one with good cheerful manners will be kept every time.

I impress on them that if only they can make themselves be a necessity to the people above them they are bound to rise and prosper ; and if you look at it from a matter-of-fact point of view, it does not take any more energy or time to do one sort of work than another kind, and if you are doing one you can't be expected to do the other, so why make a fuss and say it isn't your job ?

When I had been working at the canteen for two years it had to be closed down, and as this was a frightful blow to everybody concerned, Mr. Baxter, who owns the *Christian Herald* and is Trustee of the Fund, made a new arrangement by which he and I carried it on together. He was naturally more interested in the

2d. soups for which the Fund gives out about £500 worth of tickets a year, and I was very keen on the 5d. dinners too, as they do a tremendous amount of good among the people I have already described, who make only a very small living from day to day and could not afford the ordinary prices. Also, there are a lot of old-age pensioners who have no relations living to lodge with, and therefore have to pay rent out of their 10s., which leaves such a very small margin over for their food that but for our 5d. dinners they could never have a really solid meal at all.

For nine months of the year we have an average of 500 people a day at the canteen between twelve and one-thirty, but in the summer there are about 300, as a lot of them go down to the country and work during the harvest. Of course it does not quite pay its way, particularly in the summer, on account of there being less people, and also, the food not keeping at all, everything left has to be given away before closing down each afternoon.

Though this summer has been so cold, the rain and frequent thunder have made it the worst year for keeping food I ever remember. One day in August a whole cauldron of soup which had been made of fresh meat that morning, and had just been carried into the canteen from the kitchen absolutely good, turned sour in five minutes while a thunderstorm was going on and had to be thrown away, so we had to make up meals for the men who came out of anything we could get.

From the accounts I have before me I make out that during the last three months we are from £2 to £4 down every week, besides my little contribution, but it varies very much, as sometimes kind friends in the country will spare us a sack of potatoes from their garden or field,

and if we get any of these they are the greatest help, as potatoes are almost our heaviest item. Mr. Andrews, who manages the canteen, was a gunner, and he is an excellent cook, and as keen about the whole concern as we are. We are often able to take on boys who are down and out and train them at the canteen, passing them on to better-paid jobs when they are fit for it. In that way it is very useful to see if men who ask us to get them jobs really mean it and will work, as they soon die away on one excuse or another if they only want what they call "assistance"!! We do not get many women as a rule, but they can come if they want to and have a table of their own. However, they seem to be able to live on the funniest little scraps of their own, and make themselves cups of tea unless they are completely homeless.

Sometimes we have a pathetic little family who stray in—people who have been turned out of their lodgings, and are generally in the first stages of tearful despair. If they are of a better class and obviously feeling their position keenly, we generally fix them up at a table by themselves behind a screen in the corner, as they are not accustomed to the rather lousy old women who are our usual patrons. In any case, we never refuse food to anyone, but they all prefer to pay if they have the money.

Four ladies come down and work every day of the week except Sunday, when we have to close, as we come under the Refreshments Act, and cannot afford to have extra staff for that day. The part about the canteen which appeals to most of the people interested in it is that it does not entail any subscription for the workers or run them into any expense unless they wish to give of their own accord to any particular person.

If they want to give a dinner or rice or coffee to someone with whom they have made friends, or who they think looks hungry, they can do so without any fuss, and just put the money in the till. In this way people who are very badly off and unable to give to charity are able to have the interest of the canteen, and to feel that they are actually doing something with their own hands to help in the world, so that the workers consist of every sort of kind and age, and they all feel it belongs to them and love it. We have society girls, mothers of families who own big houses, young married women, professional women, and quite old ladies. My dear Nurse Wise, who was a monthly nurse all her life and brought all my children into the world, works one day a week.

Everybody who has ever worked there remembers the canteen, and sends one or more half-crowns at Christmas to give a free dinner to some homeless man or woman. For on Christmas Day we have a feast. The tables are all laid, and anybody who is in London and can spare the time comes down and waits on the guests. We had over 900 last Christmas in relays (or, as Mr. Andrews calls it, "settings," as if they were hens) of 200 at a time, and as each lot goes out they get a pork pie and mince pie in a bag to have for supper that evening, besides fruit, cigarettes, and matches, etc.

Everybody who has any relations or friends goes to them on Christmas Day, but just imagine how dreary it must be for the doss-house or homeless ones! Nothing to do, nothing to look at, streets absolutely empty, nobody about, nothing to eat, even if they had the money to pay for it, cold, hungry, and depressed. What a day!

Anyhow, with the aid of half-crowns from all our



THE "WELCOME" CANTEEN.

friends, known and unknown, they fill up a bit of this time, and from 11.30 to 3 we all work without stopping for a moment, serving out dinners, then handing out the presents. A rush to clear and re-lay the tables, and the next lot comes in, and so on *ad lib*. Most of the regular workers are away at Christmas or have children to be Christmassy with, but we generally can raise ten or twelve unattached people to come and help us, and we manage to make it cheerful and amusing.

Last Christmas I had seen to it that all my down-and-out friends and acquaintances should have a bed that night, but as I felt sure there would be some pathetic remnants left out on the Square (Trafalgar Square is always alluded to as the Square *par excellence*), I got my nephew, Ronny Dawnay, to hide a huge hamper of buns in the back of his car, and on our way back from a most enjoyable dinner and evening with our great friends, John Perry and John Gielgud (of much renown in the theatrical world), we called at the Square and fed the derelicts thereon. Ronny sat in his car to guard the buns, and I went backwards and forwards to replenish my stock until I found a small and ragged boy to assist. I had called out "Ronny, are there any more buns?" when he first joined me, so when he went by himself he called out "Any more buns, Ronny?" too, and became a sort of member of the family for the time being. I had saved up some shillings and hidden them away, so that I had the satisfaction of seeing the Square completely bare of inhabitants for that night only, as they all toddled off to get beds after our feast was over. Somehow I could not bear anyone to feel, "Gosh, it's Christmas night. Here I am and nobody cares."

CHAPTER X

IN August 1929 Miss Baxter had her marvellous inspiration, and started the midnight motor coffee-van for all the homeless down-and-outs who are sleeping out at night, and knowing that I was tremendously interested and a very bad sleeper, she let me help her with it, for which I shall always be immensely thankful. At first we went out every other night, and I must try to cast my mind back so as to remember some of the funny and sad little things that happened that autumn and winter. We always open up at 1 a.m., so as to get only the genuine ones who have no beds, as by that time the trams, buses, and Underground have stopped, and the streets are nearly deserted, so that those who have got anywhere to sleep are safely in bed, and would not be bothered to keep out for the sake of a cup of tea, bread and dripping, and a cigarette.

But it is not only the food and drink—though that is a great comfort to our patrons—it is the lights and cheerfulness, the passing of the time that helps to get them through the night, for nights are much longer than people think. When ordinary people sit up enjoying themselves till three or four in the morning they think they are frightfully late, but there are hours more to live through till anything happens ; there is five o'clock and six o'clock and seven o'clock ; even at eight o'clock there aren't many people about, and the early mornings are the coldest part.

That first winter we used to drive round from place to place in the coffee-van, as the down-and-outs did

not know us, so we had to find them. We would open up on the Embankment at one—then go up to the Square—then along the Mall and up to Bayswater Road, returning to the Embankment for breakfast from five o'clock to six.

There was quite a different sort of little colony in each place, and they never seemed to mix. In Bayswater Road there were about twenty-five to thirty every night, among them two old women who became great friends of ours—called Nelly and Annie ; on wet nights we used to search for them all over the place, and carry their supper to them when we found their hiding-place tucked away in some corner.

At one time there was a big house being turned into flats, and the workmen had put a large pile of bricks in the porch, leaving a little hole quite sheltered at the back. The old ladies were terrified of the policeman finding this retreat and moving them on, so we were very careful not to betray them, and had to look up and down the street like conspirators before we took them their meal.

One night I started out from the van, which we had drawn up some way away so as not to attract attention ; looking round, and not seeing anyone, I was just starting across the road with my tray of teacups and cakes, when the light of a policeman's lamp flashed down the street warning me that I must be cautious. As it was evident that he had seen me I thought it better not to retreat, so walked up the middle of the road to the very end, in the pouring rain, with my tray held out in front of me, looking elaborately into all the obviously empty doorsteps in the most completely idiotic way, while the policeman just stood and watched me with growing suspicion, not the least taken in by my eccen-

tric behaviour. However, I had to come back again, trying to look unconscious and innocent under his fierce scrutiny and, when I got within hailing distance of the van, called out to the driver, Mr. Carroll, "I can't find them anywhere." But the policeman would not move, so we had to drive away without giving them their supper. They told us afterwards that they were in a panic for fear we should reveal their hiding-place, and had watched us anxiously through a hole in the bricks.

At one time Nelly got ill and went to hospital, so Annie was all alone. I had a bad cold, and Mr. Carroll said he would go over to where she was and tell her to come and get her supper, as it was a fine night. He came back without her, looking very astonished, and saying that, when he had said to her, "Will you come over for some tea?" she had answered very firmly, "No, thank you." The next time we were out I asked her why, and she suddenly burst out laughing, and told me that she had not recognized Mr. Carroll in the dark doorway, and had thought he was a would-be admirer trying to lead her astray by bribing her with a cup of tea. Poor old pet, she was not what you would call a reigning beauty, so we chaffed Mr. Carroll for a long time over his choice in "best girls," particularly as Mrs. Carroll was with us on the van too. Annie used to sell matches in the Edgware Road. It seems that one need not have a licence to sell matches, but there is some rather delicate etiquette over the matter: the correct behaviour for those kind souls who buy matches, but do not actually wish to take them, being to put down the money, lift up a box of matches, and put it down again on another part of the tray.

If this is done the match-seller cannot be had up for

begging, but if the money is given and the matches are not moved, any constable who wants a little bit of work to vary the monotony of his beat can run the unfortunate seller in—though I do not think that there are many who would. However, Annie did get arrested for this awful crime, and her description of the whole affair was marvellous. She laughed till she cried over the scene in the police-court, and the amusement and kindness of the Magistrate when the evidence of the wardress, who had searched her, was given, as it seems that only the twopence that caused her disaster and the other twopence which every down-and-out keeps concealed about him always if possible so as to prove that he is not “without visible means of subsistence” (one of the worst crimes anyone can commit in the eyes of the law—apparently), was the only money in her possession. The constable, having sworn that he had watched Annie begging for hours and receiving large sums of money, felt rather foolish, and got well ticked off for unnecessary zeal. The wardress gave Annie a good meal and the sergeant of police a couple of shillings when she was discharged without a stain on her character.

There was a blind man in the Bayswater Road who always told us every night the story of how, years ago, a farmer had flicked at him with his whip and blinded him. He employed an old woman called Minnie to lead him about. He gave her five shillings a week out of his blind pension (ten shillings), and paid for her food, but he never would pay for a bed, and so she had to stay out too. They wandered round all night, and poor Minnie's feet were so bad that she never could keep still for a moment, but changed from foot to foot, always hoping that the one she was not on would be

less awful than the one she was. The old man has disappeared now, and I heard that poor Minnie had died in hospital, which was a great relief to me, as I could not bear to think of her still hopping along on her poor feet.

Another member of our party up there was a very sad and dirty man who never spoke. He seemed quite dotty, and had a sort of settled melancholia over him that nothing could penetrate. The others told us in husky whispers that he had once been a solicitor, and that someone had let him down, with the result that he had become a bankrupt and lost his reason. He has disappeared now. He found his way to the Embankment a couple of times after the police had cleared off all our friends from Bayswater Road, but he evidently hated the big crowds down there and all the chat and chaff that went on, so he did not come any more.

We used to get a lot of very shaggy, trampy-looking men up there, but I noticed that they spoke in far more cultured voices and accents than the cleaner and better-dressed men, and obviously had been well educated originally.

The younger boys and men seemed to stay round the Square and the Embankment even in those early days, and I can remember various little tragedies that we came across that first winter. One night, when it was terribly cold and snowing slightly, we came upon a young boy all by himself far down the Embankment. He was just leaning up against a stone projection, and something in his attitude conveyed such hopeless despair and misery that we stopped and went over with a cup of tea to try to find out what was the matter. He seemed quite dumb at first, but after a while told us in a broken way that he suffered from fits, and, not being able to keep a job in consequence, had saved

a little money while he was well and bought a small attaché-case with some ornaments and little things to sell. In this way he made enough money for his bed and food.

That day he had restocked his case with all the money that was left over except fourpence, which he spent on tea and buns at one of those half-open cafés. There was a bench up the side of this one, and when he had drunk his tea, he dropped off to sleep for a few minutes ; only to wake and find his case and all the contents gone—stolen from him by some mean brute who took advantage of his exhaustion. We managed to comfort him a bit and collected some new stock and a hawker's licence. For a long time he used to come to the canteen whenever he wanted a free dinner, and the last I heard of him was that a doctor had taken an interest in his case, operated on his head, which cured the fits, and that he was in a good regular job.

Another night about that time we noticed a boy who was wearing the most extraordinary garment—a long, heavy, old-fashioned sort of ulster tied round his waist with string, no socks, and shoes that were held together by a bandage. Several of the very young boys were running round and round to keep themselves warm. One of these, in passing, caught hold of the coat, and to our horror we saw that the boy had nothing on at all underneath. By the next night that we were out we had collected a trousseau for him, so he retired behind Cleopatra's Needle and arrayed himself with great care and speed. Afterwards he told me about this disaster. It seems he got wet through, so took off all his clothes in the doss-house that night to let them dry—only to find next morning that some early bird had pinched the lot. He made such a fuss that in the end

the owner of the lodging-house routed out the archaic ulster and the soleless shoes from a box of relics. He often comes to see us at the van, sometimes very smart and sometimes extremely grubby, as he is the sort of person whose fortunes seem to vary. He and I have had many fights over jobs that he has lost through doing foolish things, and we are often not on speaking terms, but still, we make it up and are friends again after a bit.

Losing possessions in a doss-house is a very everyday affair. I am told that the best plan is to put the feet of your bed into your boots if you want to keep them, but it must be the top-end feet, as the others could be gently lifted without waking the sleeper. We have often had very funny scenes when we take out shoes and boots, all the boys sitting along the pavement trying them on and exchanging with each other when theirs do not fit, but we never give any away unless their feet are absolutely on the ground, and always collect the horrid remnants afterwards to throw away. Socks are much sought after. In many cases there is only a piece of old rag tied round, and terribly sore places where they have walked long distances and almost worn away bits of their feet. We carry a "First-aid Outfit," and Mr. Carroll is very good at attending to all the wounds and poisoned fingers, etc., which are always cropping up.

My friends are very kind, and give me a certain amount of cast-off clothing, but of course not nearly enough for what we need, so when I can afford it Mr. Carroll goes to the markets and picks up clothes and shoes as cheaply as possible. When anyone is in obvious need I have to make a great effort to get some for him, but if possible I try to get to know him first and then gradually fix him up—give a boy a bed, then

some clothes the following night with money for a bath, and, if I think there is a reasonable chance of his doing any good, get him off the street into a decent lodging, a few extra clothes to change into, enough for food, and so gradually to feed him up—rest him up—and clean him up till he is fit to have and keep a job, for it is not much use expecting to get any job for him while he is dirty and ragged, or him to keep one unless he has some rest and food. No employer gives a “sub” nowadays, and they have to live on nothing for the first week—unless one sees them through.

There is something so sad and depressing to me about the Embankment; perhaps it is because we always seemed to come in for tragedy down there. So often as we drove up to our stand opposite Cleopatra’s Needle someone would just have thrown himself into the water, or the poor body was just being fished out. Some of the inquisitive down-and-outs would rush to and fro, returning to report the most gruesome details to us.

One early morning we got an awful shock. There was a little, pale old lady, all dressed in black, who was deaf and never spoke. When we drove up for breakfast some of our friends came running up to tell us that a woman in black had just been drowned. From their description we were sure it must be her, and we became quite silent and depressed, so you can imagine our gasp of horror when we looked down a little later and saw what we thought was her ghost, deathly pale, staring up at us, her face just reaching up as far as the counter. However, by the way she consumed several cups of tea and a large piece of bread and dripping, we came to the conclusion that she was still alive.

When it is wet we go under the Bridge and sometimes

cruise round afterwards in search of absent friends, to Villiers Street Arches and other sheltered places, amidst great excitement and cries of "The van" when we carry tea and food over to them in the dry.

After going out with the van for a few weeks I found one soon got to know roughly how long any of our patrons had been out, and it was curious to see the various effects sleeping out has on different people. The well-dressed ones, who are obviously stranded only temporarily, generally start the night rather amused at the idea and are quite hilarious for a few hours, but towards the dawn they become very silent and wretched, sometimes quite soured on life altogether, like the man who asked me at 5 a.m. if I was paid to come out all night and, when I said no, that I just came out for fun, said with the most concentrated bitterness, "Well, some people have funny ideas of pleasure."

Some of the boys get accustomed to being out, and seem to get more cheerful after a few nights, taking it all very philosophically, but others get more and more hopeless and desperate as time goes on. There was one man of about twenty-four who looked more ragged and ghastly every time we saw him. At the time I had got about six or eight boys in hand, and I felt I simply could not take on any more till these were settled up. One night we stayed out later than usual, as Miss Baxter wanted a film done of the van, so we had to wait until it was light enough to do the picture. We filled in the time by going up to St. Martin-in-the-Fields and giving breakfast to all the crypt people as they came out at six. Then we had breakfast ourselves at the Lyons' shop near the Criterion, which is open all night, and finally came down on the Embankment again to wait for the cinema people.

I had noticed that this man had become even more depressed than usual the evening before, and when we were waiting that morning I watched him, and suddenly realized that he had reached the breaking-point. Something in the fixed glare of his eyes, staring—staring straight ahead and seeing nothing, like a dead person—the sort of expression that makes one think of the dark, cold river and the end of it all.

After the film was taken Mr. Carroll was going to drive me straight to the canteen, as I was going to work there that day, so we took the man along with us, gave him a good feed, and arranged to take him on as an extra worker. It was a Saturday, and Mr. Andrews got him clothes and a lodging, so he slept all Saturday night, Sunday, and Sunday night, and started away Monday in his new job. I did not see him for a few days, but when I went there again I saw a stranger, clean and neatly dressed, bright intelligent eyes, rushing round, busy and happy. No one could possibly have recognized him. He is on the regular staff there now, and has forgotten those sad days.

Funny and tragic things happen in Trafalgar Square, too. One night a tiny little man was passing a policeman just when his shoes fell to bits. The constable was sympathetic, and said he would give him an old pair of his, so imagine the hoots of joy when the poor little fellow appeared at the van with size twelve, or so they seemed on him, as his feet were small fives. We luckily had a suitable pair and exchanged them for the large ones, which we badly needed for an enormous man. Another time we saw a poor old man walking painfully across the stone flags with bare feet. He had taken off his boots and gone to sleep, so someone stole them and left him to his fate. Luckily we had brought

shoes and socks out for some man who never turned up, so we could fix him up too.

One old man who came to the van was not at all clean, and the others in the queue objected strongly to the live-stock which he spread among them, so they teased him, and told him he ought to go and wash in the fountain. I think he was a little bit wanting, as he took them seriously, hobbled over to the basin of water and proceeded to disrobe and wash until a constable came along and persuaded him to go down and be disinfected in the casual ward.

Lots of people make knitted mufflers for me, or cut up strips of flannel stuff for scarves, but I never have enough when the weather gets cold and an icy wind comes blowing round the corner. The men get absolutely blue with cold ; so many of them have no overcoats. We often have to lean them against the radiator of the van to warm them up before they can hold their cups of tea. I take a big bag out every night full of socks and mufflers, but it always comes back empty. One night a one-legged man asked for a sock, and I was just hesitating, as it seemed rather wicked to divide a pair of socks when so many needed them. However, the man solved the problem very quickly, calling out to a friend, " Come on, mate, split a pair of socks with me," and up came another one-legged man, hopping along on crutches.

I always seem to be asked to produce, or keep, the oddest things. Wooden legs are in great demand, and whenever my friends get sent to prison all sorts of treasured possessions are sent round for me to keep for them while they are " inside." One old man asked me to get his carpenter's tools out of an Underground station cloakroom and keep them for him, so I found

myself staggering down a taxi-less street with a fearful old box weighing about a ton. I am afraid that my flat will soon get rather too full.

A dear old man who is an outside porter at one of the stations was taken very ill and had to go to hospital, so I got a funny little parcel which contained his wallet and all his worldly wealth. On a piece of paper was scratched the words in pencil, "Please keep safe for me, lady."

We sometimes go to the oddest places. At one time a boy who played the mouth organ got taken on in a coster band, and we had to go off to the most unlikely music-halls where his turn was performing and sit in the front row clapping furiously and insisting on an encore so as to get them put on in a more prominent place in the bill.

Some of the down-and-outs have the most extraordinary ways of making a few pennies. I have known them to put petrol in their mouths and then light a match and blow, which gives the impression that the fire is coming out of their mouths. But it is frightfully dangerous, unless it is done very carefully, and they generally end up by setting themselves on fire. Of course it is strictly forbidden, which complicates matters, as, if you have to keep one eye looking out for "coppers" and the other on the match, it makes much too much of a strain for the nervous system to stand. Others tie themselves up in ropes and chains, and then relax and find their way out of their bonds, but I am told that this "strong man" stunt is out of fashion at the moment.

A lot of them go down to the fish market at Billingsgate at 5 a.m. and try to earn a few pence. The vans from the shops and stores stay up on the top of the hill above the monument, and when their buyers have chosen

the fish they want, the regular market porters place the cases of fish on their barrows, wheeling them out into the street, and calling "Hill up." There is a rush of boys, and the first who gets there has the job of pushing at the back of the barrow all the way up the steep hill, for which he gets twopence. The disadvantage of this work is that the barrow being tipped back, all the fish scales and slime from the boxes ooze out and down the front of their clothes.

The first winter that we were out this was quite good value, and they could make a shilling or two during the morning, but there are so many more derelicts now that they think themselves lucky if they get one twopenny job. However, they can generally get a few surplus fish thrown to them at the end, and there was a famous café near there where they were allowed to cook any fish they brought in if they ordered a cup of tea, but I hear this has been closed down now.

If it is fine they go and have a sleep in the parks, and towards 7 p.m. make their way to Shaftesbury Avenue and the "Dilly," as they call Piccadilly Circus, as they can very often pick up an odd sixpence in some of those streets where there are restaurants, running for cabs or guarding motors that are left down a side-street. I used to go down there a lot at one time between nine and eleven in the evening when I was looking for a boy who had been a bit of a failure and was ashamed to come back and tell me so. Sometimes one of my down-and-out boys would come with me, and I had all sorts of amusing experiences. One night we were in a yard where there was a sort of thieves' kitchen and, while we were waiting to see if the lost boy would go by, the door of a night-club opened, and the porter said to my companion, "Run down to the chemist and get a

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couple of aspirins, will you ? There's a gent in here not feeling too well " ; then seeing me he added, " I'll look after the lady." So the boy rushed off on his errand, leaving me like a parcel on the doorstep of the night-club till his return.

It is far more difficult now to get a job for even the really good boys and men than it was the first year. I used to feel sure of getting them fixed up in two or three weeks, but now it may be months if they haven't got any special qualifications or references.

When they do get into a good job and are settled up with clothes and everything, they generally come out once in a while to see us and report progress. Some of them come only once, and then lose touch completely as long as they are successful and happy, which is really better for them, but the failures always return, so that one is rather inclined at moments of depression to feel a little disheartened. However, when I look at my book and see the names of heaps of boys I have almost forgotten all about and realize that they are prosperous and self-respecting human beings now, I do feel it is worth it.

Whenever I see a long-lost face I always have a nervous feeling that perhaps he has lost his job or got into trouble, until he grins and says that he is all right and only out to look us up. He generally is very smartly dressed and has rather a proud air. He accepts a cup of tea and a cigarette with a slightly patronizing smile, asking after the companions of his " day," and looks rather scornfully on the present " generation " with a " boys were very different in my van days " expression of face, but all the same, I'm glad when they do feel like that, because it shows that they really are settled down, and the lure of the streets no longer holds them.

CHAPTER XI

THERE are always a certain amount of frauds going round, and we get a good deal of quiet amusement out of their obvious little schemes ; as a rule, these do not come out to the van, but attack us privately by letter or telephone. The telephone booths have been rather a curse with regard to these people. Before there were so many about they could not find one's address, as if they went into the post office or small shop and once started to look anyone up in the book, they had not the face to go away without giving a number, and also had to produce the twopence when that number was found, but now they can walk into some lonely booth and look up anyone's address without interference. I get some marvellous messages down the telephone. It is generally a " gentleman from Manchester " or " Captain Smith " who is phoning, sometimes " the Rev. Mr. Davis " ; but whoever it is, they always have found some very deserving man whom they know all about and are sending him down to see me for " assistance." They get very peevish when I say tartly, " If you are looking after this man and think him so deserving, why don't you help him yourself ? " A slight pause follows, and then they say they are " not in a position to do so." I answer, " Neither am I," and put on the receiver, as I know perfectly well that they themselves are the " deserving case." I can sometimes hear the whispered conversation with their confederate going on in the box, " What shall I say ? "

Some of them take a very high tone. If it is not a

voice I know I pretend not to be myself, and when they ask to speak to Lady Anson I say, "What is your name, and what do you want?" They always say it is "Private business." I say, "Is it money you want?" and they stoutly deny this. One man who began speaking in very refined tones got put out with me when I wanted to know his business, and said, "You don't want to let me speak to Lady Anson, is that it?" I said, "Lady Anson does not speak to anyone she does not know unless they say what it is they want to speak about." So he got furious. "See here, I'm a gentleman, I am, and I'm not accustomed to be spoke to like that by servants. Do you hear that? I'm a gentleman, I am." I said, "Yes, you sound like one," and rang off. They always say that a gentleman sent them who knows them very well. "Did he send a note to recommend them?"—"No."—"Do they know his address?"—"No."—"Why not?"—"They've only seen him once out of doors."—"Then how is it he knows them so well?" One man said that the doctor had told him he had rheumatoid arthritis, and could never work again, so would I give him money for his ticket to Hartlepool; in fact, the great point all frauds have in common is this craving to get away to some distant spot, the farther off and the more expensive the journey the better.

When I tell them to walk it, and get lifts if they can, they think me very unreasonable, and the ones who must have a private interview with me I tell to come out to the van, which puts them off equally, as they say that one in the morning is much too late for them to be up, to which the obvious answer is: "I look after down-and-outs; if you are sleeping out, anyhow, no time is too late; if you have a bed, you are not down-and-out."

Even the boys I know sometimes ring me up and say very funny things. One perfectly useless boy called Greenhill, whom I had tried to help long before, and when I got him a job had walked out and let me down, rang up to tell me that he had been travelling with a circus and had got married. I was horror-struck at the idea, and asked him what on earth made him do such a mad thing when he couldn't even keep himself, so he said very confidentially, "Well, you see, she was in the circus too, and you know what happened, lady, so now we've got a lovely little baby."

I have grown very distrustful of couples who ask for help, particularly if they have a baby with them. I don't think I have ever known a genuine case. One couple came with twin babies eight weeks old. They had hardly any covering over them in the old pram, and looked dreadfully sickly creatures. I am not very fond of babies myself, and also have a sort of theory that if there is no prospect of any improvement in the finances of a family, they might as well starve or go into the workhouse this week as next week. I don't mind helping if it is just to tide over a crisis, but I do not see how one can go on supporting a whole family for long. To begin with, they have to have a room at about fifteen shillings a week, and are lucky if they can find one for less than a pound, instead of a bed in a doss-house, which a single man can get for eightpence a night or a woman at a shilling, and then there is food on top, so that it is a different proposition altogether, and quite out of my beat. However, everybody else got very wrought up about these unfortunate twins, and several people gave them shawls and money. The woman came back a week later carrying one child, saying that her husband had stayed with the

other twin, who was ill. I have never seen any child grow so quickly : it was quite large and much more healthy looking. We said, " Surely that baby is more than nine weeks old," and she looked rather embarrassed, saying that the twins were eight months old, not eight weeks. Afterwards we all compared notes, and were absolutely certain that this baby was quite a different one altogether, so she had evidently borrowed or hired both lots for begging purposes.

A couple with a baby turned up at the van the other night and made a very sad tale. Several of our friends among the queue whispered to us that they had seen a gentleman give these people a ten-shilling note on the steps of St. Martin's earlier in the evening. When they came up for their second cup of tea and began asking for help again, we thought we would do a bluff, and one of us said : " What have you done with that ten-shilling note my friend gave you this evening ? " I never saw people so taken aback. They just melted into space.

When I first started helping down-and-outs I got frightfully taken in. I remember one man said he had cancer of the throat, and I took a lot of trouble trying to get him into a hospital. When it was all fixed up and he had got money and clothes he never went. Another man wanted a dress suit, as he said he was to do dramatic critic on some small newspaper, but I luckily got on to the editor, and he told me that, though he knew this man and was sorry for him, all he had to do with the paper was that he was allowed to come into the correspondents' room and sit and write his own letters there.

A man called Grayson said he was starting work in a branch office of Electrolux, and gave me the telephone number and the name of the manager, but of course

came after one o'clock on a Saturday, so that I could not verify it. However, I went into my room on some excuse and looked up the number while he was waiting, saw it was not the right one, and when he came back on the Monday told him that they knew nothing of him. He said it was most extraordinary, as he had been speaking to Mr. —, the manager, on Saturday morning, and I was able to tell him that the latter was away on his holiday, so he faded out of my life very quickly too.

One boy called Walker said he was just taken on as a waiter at the Café Royal, and when I rang up to verify it they said that there was a boy working there of that name, but he was in no need of assistance, and had been on duty at the time the other had called, so I went there to see him, and found him to be quite different. We never found out how the first boy knew that his namesake was working there, or if it was only a coincidence.

I do not allow anyone to come to my private address now or ever see them if by chance they do appear, but last year, when I was getting such a lot of appeals from both frauds and genuine cases, I used to get some of the boys on the queue whom I could trust to go and find out for me if these people really were living or working where they said they were, as it was so often some very small café, without a telephone, or else their mother who was ill was being turned out of some distant lodging at Hackney Wick or Bow, and I could not possibly find time to go all that way. One boy was particularly good at finding out all this information for me, and when he fell out of work through an accident to his hands, which were scalded, I took him on temporarily just to tide him over, really more as an excuse to make a job for him than anything else, as I thought it better for

him to work for what little money I could give him, and he really was a great help.

However, I got into great trouble over this, when by bad luck he got taken up with another boy for loitering, though he had only been at that place a few seconds, the boy he was speaking to having already been told to move on a couple of times. The police-court magistrate asked my friend if he was working, and he answered that he was making enquiries for me, and added that I was the lady who went out and helped with the all-night coffee-van. I suppose this muddled the magistrate, and made him think that the boy did his work for me at night, though how he could go and make enquiries at shops and houses during those hours, or what use it would be to do so, I cannot imagine. In any case, I have never been able to understand why it should be worse to do things at night than in the daytime, but some people seem to be under the impression that after 10 p.m. any deed becomes automatically vicious if not positively criminal. I suppose the magistrate must have been of this turn of mind, as he proceeded to abuse me in front of the whole Court, saying that it was outrageous of this woman to employ a boy on such a degrading and disgusting job, etc., etc., which seemed rather hard, as I was not present or represented in any way, and he had taken no trouble to find out any facts, but just condemned me on the words of a small boy in the dock.

I was very much surprised, as I always thought it was quite illegal for anyone in an official position to pronounce judgment in a public place on someone who was not being tried. However, perhaps magistrates do not think it necessary for them to keep the laws themselves.

I see that Mr. Justice Wright evidently agrees with me on this point, as he said, during the Kylsant case, when some allusion was made to another person who was not on trial—"It is an elementary principle of justice that no opinion, certainly no adverse opinion, should be formed against any person who is not actually before the Court and in a position to state his case. What their position is you may or may not have any opinion, but it is not an opinion which can be based on evidence."

Another magistrate, before whom I appeared to speak as to the character of a man who had been arrested by mistake, told me that we did a lot of harm with the coffee-van, as it brought people up to London from the northern towns and Scotland, which idea, though no doubt very complimentary to our world-wide renown, seemed a little exaggerated to me. I wondered if it would be a comfort to him if we promised to ask for everybody's birth certificate before giving him a cup of tea. Anyway, he was so worried about it that he sentenced the wrong man, and there was quite a commotion in the Court until this was rectified, as even the police could not find anything against my protégé.

You might think that, if you are arrested by mistake and the police bring no evidence against you, you would be discharged without a stain upon your character, but if this is the accepted idea of most people, it only shows how little they know about police-courts. The magistrate is a complete law unto himself. If he is a human being and a decent soul with sympathy and understanding, he can do a marvellous lot of good, but if he suffers from indigestion, or has allowed himself to get strong and very often unreasonable prejudices, he does

more harm than most people by turning perfectly harmless human beings into bitter criminals, and proving that there is one law for the rich and another for the poor. I think it is a frightful thing that all friendless and unimportant people should take it for a certainty that they have not got a dog's chance against the powers that be, even if they have done nothing against the law, and when you have mixed and lived with them as much as I have, it is a revelation how completely they take this for granted. Perhaps it is more noticeable in their surprise when someone in authority shows the most ordinary understanding of their case.

There is a man who goes by the name of "Charlie Chaplin," as he can copy the comedian to the life, and often did it in pit queues or in the smaller cinemas when one of the Chaplin films was being shown. One day he and a friend called Bob were going along after they left us in the early morning. They were walking slowly, as they meant to get to the fish market about five. Some over-zealous constable arrested them for the usual "loitering with intent" that is such a Godsend to disagreeable young policemen. They were brought up at the Court next morning, and luckily for them appeared before one of the kind-hearted magistrates who understand. He asked if they had any implement on them and, when the constable said no, asked him how he suggested they could commit a felony without anything but their hands to "break and enter" with. (This point, I may add, which is all-important on these occasions, I have known to be completely left out of any questions that are asked by the magistrate or clerk over and over again, and as they do all the questioning that is done, the fact remains obscure, and is not taken

into consideration. At the very end the prisoner is asked if he has anything to say, but as a rule is too upset and nervous by then to make any protest, and he certainly is not encouraged to bring up any arguments in his favour.) But to go back to the case in point. The magistrate then asked the policeman if he would have arrested him had he seen him do exactly as "Charlie" and his friend had done, and when he replied that he would not, remarked, "Well, it seems to me that all you go by as to a person being a potential criminal or not is the state of the clothes," and let the prisoners off.

This matter of clothes is so terribly true. Nobody seems to realize that it is hardly ever the rough-looking men who are of criminal intent. The successful criminals even on a small scale are always able to keep themselves neatly dressed : it is part of their stock-in-trade. Even out at the van, it is nearly always the better-dressed men who try to come up twice, and down face you that it is not their first round so as to get the extra cigarette and double quantity of food, though they know that by so doing we may run out completely and some late-comer be left without anything at all. It is the same with beds. The crooks don't have to sleep out, and yet I have heard a magistrate pompously remark over some perfectly harmless boy, "He may have a good character, but he would not be hanging about the streets at that time of night if he wasn't up to some mischief," and sentence him to a month. It makes one weep to think that such unimaginative beings exist, and can get positions of authority over the lives of others. Where are they to "hang about" if they have no homes, no money, no beds? If they go to sleep on a seat they are woken up

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because they might be dead, and the policeman gets into trouble if someone dies on his beat. They can't lie, they can't sit ; if they stand they are loitering ; if they walk slowly they are up to no good ; if they walk fast or run they must have done something or why should they hurry ? What in heaven's name do they expect them to do ? They can only go into the " spike " one night a month, and then are kept in all next day, so cannot look for a job, and are in just as poor a plight the next night, besides the fact that their clothes are removed and baked by the casual-ward people, so that they are returned to them quite ruined and break off like a biscuit when touched.

It is this lack of sympathetic understanding among some of the magistrates that makes me feel so strongly that they ought to have a special training apart from their knowledge of the law. Nearly all the people they have to deal with are of the lowest class in the social scale, and yet most of them know absolutely nothing of their lives or points of view. If it was not for the police-court missionaries, who really do have knowledge and marvellous patience and understanding, I do not know what would become of half the prisoners who are brought up. For even if these are not sent to prison, they are very often put on probation, though nothing has been proved against them. One magistrate, who has a mania that persons should return to whatever place they happen to have been born in—regardless of whether they had left their birthplace when they were children, whether they had any friends, relations, or chance of getting work there—orders perfectly innocent people to leave London by the next day, forbidding them to return for three years, though why anyone should have the power to commit this

outrage on the liberty of someone who is proved to have committed no wrong I do not know, and is it not disgraceful that it should be possible for some old gentleman to do this daily to friendless people, when he would not dare or dream of giving an order of banishment to you or me?

It seems terrible to me that one should know in advance directly one hears which magistrate is sitting that day in Court whether your unfortunate protégé will get justice and mercy or not. I have known cases where the maximum sentence for the crime has been three months, and out of pure spite the magistrate has divided the accusation arbitrarily into three parts so as to give a treble sentence, this being made possible by the people whose property was found on the premises having sent in a huge claim to their insurance under the pretence that the stolen stuff belonged to three different members of the family and making the total come to over a hundred pounds, when in point of fact no one would have given more than fifteen shillings at an old-clothes shop for the whole collection. Even the police admitted this to me, yet a boy goes to prison for nine months for a first offence, though it was agreed that he did not take the stuff himself and got nothing out of the affair, while the people who made a false claim on this insurance office go about without a stain on their character, and were probably paid in full. Certainly justice has been wisely portrayed as being "blind."

Another point in the cases brought against men of "receiving stolen goods" which is very often not allowed for is the fact that if they happen to be married they have a room instead of living in an eightpenny doss, like the rest of their acquaintances, and therefore

their friends have a habit of leaving possessions, both honestly and dishonestly come by, in their care for a day or two—sometimes even without telling them they will run up and shove a suit-case under the bed. It is no use saying, "Well, they should not associate with people who are not honest." You might just as well say that nobody should have gone to tea with Whitaker Wright or Hatry when he was successful. Quite a lot of everybody's relations and friends do funny little things that may not be strictly honest, but you probably might prefer their company if they were pleasant and amusing to others who were aggressively honest, having plenty of money, and no temptation to be otherwise. Personally, I have the greatest possible sympathy with anyone who gets landed with other people's possessions, as I have suffered from it so terribly myself. The amount of top-hats in boxes which my flat contains would fill a shop, and I remember some years ago coming home from a tea-party and finding what I thought was a coffin under my bed, besides several packing-cases. These turned out to be the Army Golf Challenge Cups and other trophies which the gunners had won that year, they having been brought down from the scene of triumph by our great friend, Major C. B. Ormerod, who was the Army Champion on that occasion, and shoved under my bed by him. As he said, it was the safest place he could think of at the moment. After that incident I would never condemn anyone, however damning the evidence might be.

A short time ago I was rung up at about ten o'clock from a police-station, and the sergeant told me that a man I know, who is the owner of quite a big business, had been brought in and accused of being drunk and disorderly by some restaurant keeper who had given

him in charge. The police surgeon had pronounced him to be drunk, and he had demanded to have another doctor's opinion. This is a thing that a lot of people do not know, but anybody can insist on having his own independent doctor as long as he can name one to send for. In this case he did not know of a doctor, so suddenly thought of me, and asked me to send one along, which I did. The new doctor demonstrated before the sergeant and the police surgeon that the man was not drunk, and even got the surgeon to admit that he could not certify him as drunk after what he had seen him do, and when the case came up my friend proved that the accusation was a false one brought against him by spite after an altercation with the accuser, but it only shows how careless is the system of passing people off as drunk and ruining their reputations, unless they are able to call someone to their aid.

As a general rule the police are very good and kind, and they have nearly always been very nice and helpful to me, particularly the sergeants and inspectors at the police-stations, who often ring me up at all hours of the night to tell me "There's a friend of yours down 'ere," and ask me to come along and bail him out, or give suggestions for the procedure of the morning after at the Court. All the same, I do think that the system is all wrong, by which one disagreeable constable should be able to drag anyone off to the station and charge him for no reason whatever. The down-and-outs call it the policeman's "half-day off," as, if a constable does charge anyone and appears at Court the next morning, he gets the rest of the day free, and this seems to be rather a temptation should there be a football match of note taking place the next afternoon. Others think they will get promotion quicker if they

keep on drawing attention to themselves, but I think that the sergeants might be a little more severe than they are, on what they call "frivolous cases," and make it a black mark against the constables who bring them.

It really is ridiculous to see two enormous policemen dragging some unfortunate half-starved boy between them, as if he were the most dangerous and desperate character, down to the station, leaving the whole of that district clear for the real smash-and-grab criminal to operate in, and the sight of a car left by perfectly unoffending people in an absolutely empty street will keep any constable brooding like a hen for hours waiting for his victims to appear, though the rest of his beat is left to see after itself, which I cannot think is a reasonable state of things. Surely it should be possible to impress into policemen's heads the things that are important and the things that are not, or is it quite hopeless to expect anything so rational from the official mind?

CHAPTER XII

MY association with down-and-outs has led me into some very odd places. One of the most interesting was an evening spent in Limehouse with a friend of mine who knew his way about there. We did all the usual things—a visit to Charlie Brown's, where we saw all his treasures. He has made his money now, and the front part of the pub. is very respectable and generally full of tourists, who come there in charabancs to see "Life," but at the back there is still a bar and dance hall, where sailors disport themselves. However, there is a different entrance to that part, and it is not on show to the usual visitor. Opposite this is a very ornamental pub. which I think is owned by Charlie Brown's son, and these two are practically at the East India Dock gates, so all the sailors start their evenings there.

Lower down the road there is another pub., which has rather an unsavoury reputation, and is alluded to as "The Open Door," as it is supposed to be the centre of the White Slave Traffic which goes on ceaselessly, however much the authorities wage war against it, mostly to South America. It is interesting to sit in the bar there and see the whole life of the place going on. The same women always haunt these places every night on the lookout for some sailor who is a bit excited at being on shore again and has already visited several other pubs. Each time the door opens all the heads look round like lightning to see if the newcomer is more worth cultivating than the one they are dealing

with at the moment. The drunker the sailor, the more attractive he seems, as when they take him home with them it is easier to go through his pockets and take everything of value without any fighting, and their gentleman friend need not appear on the scene until the unconscious man has to be carried down the stairs and left in the gutter of another street. If the sailor is likely to show fight, the friend comes in unexpectedly as an aggrieved husband, and a companion from next door hits the sailor on the head while the fight is in progress. All very simple, but apparently sailors are the only people who are astonished at this behaviour. They must have very trusting natures.

The Chinese quarter is just behind the main street on either side—little dark alleys of the most obvious-looking houses, but the doors are wide open; and a lighted signal hanging over them pronounced them to be either places for gambling or opium smoking. Any doors inside were boarded up, and there was nothing to be seen but the long passage to the very back of the house, where a door could be seen slightly ajar and a little light hanging over it. At the sound of anyone stepping over the doorstep invisible eyes would see and decide how far that person should penetrate into the mysteries of the house.

Nearly all the Chinese men have white wives, as the women of those parts find them infinitely kinder and better to live with than the rough bullies of their own class.

We had dinner at a Chinese restaurant, and it really was interesting. The Chinese man and his wife were sitting by the fire in the same room, also a girl who looked about twelve, and was holding a tiny baby in her arms. I thought she was a servant, or perhaps an

elder sister of the child, but they told us she was the mother. There was a man behind the counter, and various Chinese customers came in and out. After we had finished our meal they brought us tea in thin little bowls without handles, and we sat on for ever so long, while the proprietor and his family had their dinner. They all sat round together: the man cook from the kitchen, the odd man, the one behind the counter as well. There were five dishes put on the table—one with bits of fish, and others with meat and various things all mixed up. Each person brought his or her own bowl and chopsticks, and there was a huge saucepan of rice on a side table. They filled up the bowl from this, and then picked a piece from here and there off the dishes, putting each mouthful into the rice and then into their mouths, and in between scooping the rice up sideways with the bowl held up close to their faces. The etiquette seemed to be that no one who came into the restaurant expected to be attended to until the owners had finished their dinner; so the latter chattered and laughed away in Chinese, and never even looked up if people came and settled themselves at various tables.

As each of the family finished they went over and filled their basin with tea, drinking this standing up. The rice was so marvellously boiled that the basin did not even need washing when all of it was eaten and before the tea was poured in, but at the end they all took off their own basin and chopsticks, washed them, and put them away.

Among other places in Limehouse we went to see a most marvellous old Swedish Baroness of over eighty years of age, who for more than forty years has kept a Mission to Seamen. It is quite a small house, but she

has used up every penny she had in the world to keep it going, and now there are times when there is nothing to eat in the whole place, and very often the old lady and her poor derelict guests sit round and starve, hoping against hope that something will fall from heaven for them. She told us that sometimes when they are all speechless from hunger they will hear a footstep coming up the steps and the clink of a coin falling into the box. Someone will rush out, and perhaps it is half a crown thrown in by a sailor who has been rescued by her and taken into shelter years before, when he was on his beam ends. Anyhow, whatever sum it is, food is quickly bought, and they all share alike as far as it goes. Sometimes the house is so filled with people that they are lying everywhere on the floor and in every corner. Of course, she is only allowed to take in so many by law and very often a policeman comes and tells her that she must turn some of her guests away, but she is full of spirit, and says dramatically : " No, you can take me to prison " ; and, of course, he would not do so for the world, as she is a sort of Queen and heroine down there. Probably the very same policeman will come the next night bringing a whole family that he has discovered wandering round destitute, and implore her to take them in, in spite of the fact that she is already over full.

Of course, the sailors don't dream of going to her house when they have any money. She gets all those who have spent their pay or had it stolen from them, but I suppose that is inevitable, human nature being what it is.

If I had any money I should build a sailors' hotel up against the dock gates, and in it I should have a small branch bank and safety vault. Then I would get into touch with all the shipowners whose boats come into

the East India Docks and make an arrangement by which my agents went on board each ship as it came in and got the sailors to book up cheap beds in advance, arranging with them to come straight there first thing when they were paid off and leave their things safely locked away before going on the razzle. In this way they would be advised to put what money they didn't want for immediate use in the bank, and just take enough for an evening's pleasure. They also would have a bed to come back to when their funds gave out. I am sure it would save many lives and much misery, and also defeat the evil people who make their living out of these wretched men. I would not have any religion or charity mixed up in the project, but once started would let it pay for itself.

Another expedition I went one evening was to a famous café in Aldgate, which is supposed to be the haunt of all the bad boys of the town. It is a dilapidated little place and very dark ; only one person can stand between the counter and the passage wall, and where you pass down there is a narrow opening between rows of pews, stone slab-topped tables dividing the seats in each. At the very end is an empty space, where any boys who have had a difference of opinion can fight it out if they want to. I am told that the police will not enter this café when looking for anyone, as the inhabitants have a way of letting them through, and then doing good work from behind with the table tops on to their heads. It used to be open night and day, but as anybody could go in there and stay, whether he ordered food or not, it became a sort of refuge for people who were wanted by the police, and a new rule was passed that it had to be cleared out and shut from 12 midnight to 5 a.m.

I completely lost my character when I went into this disreputable place, as every living soul in there, except the boy behind the counter, rose up and greeted me by name. However, I said : " Well, as we all seem to be acquainted, we may as well have a party," so we turned to and had a feast of everything there was to be got. I went behind the counter and made the tea, and the boy produced pies and ham sandwiches and cakes. The establishment did not run to a bill block, but the boy kept account of what we had with a stub of pencil kept behind the ear upon the dirty white-washed wall behind. We made about four columns of figures, and in the end it came to only nine and fourpence. When I went out in the van that night the rumour of my visit had got abroad, and all the boys who had happened not to be there that evening looked very pompous and disapproving, saying they wondered at me going to such a place.

An adventure I had of a different kind had to do with our old friend Nelly, who used to haunt the Bayswater Road. After not seeing her for some months and wondering where she had gone, I got a letter from her from the poor-house, or Institute as they call it now—but I fear the name is the only thing that has changed in this depressing spot. I went to see her, and the full horror of it all descended on me : the same hopeless old people, condemned to rot away the rest of their lives among gibbering idiots and monotonous old creatures saying the same thing over and over again. When shall we have the sense and decency to divide off the perfectly good old people, whose only fault is that they are old and have never had enough wages from which to save up or relations who can support them ? Why should they be immured in these horrible prisons, knowing

that nothing but death can free them ? It is all so heart-rending and so unnecessary and ridiculous. If only they could build a block of one-roomed flats, each door a front door on an outside balcony passage, and let respectable old people have their own little belongings and their own little home ! One nurse in each block could look after the whole lot, and ten shillings a week would suffice each inmate if they were allowed to get their own food. Surely this would cost far less than those terrible places filled with officials and paid employees. What crime have these old people committed that they should have to wear those terrible clothes and be put to bed in broad daylight at six o'clock ? Let the idiots go into an asylum, but why drive the others into despair and lunacy too ? Nelly told me one little thing which sums up their life in a nutshell. A lady brought some wool for them to knit, so they each had one skein, and they knitted it up to the end every day and then unwound it again, starting again the following day at the beginning, never having enough to finish. Can you just picture such a life going on for years ?

Nelly was frantic, as her Old Age Pension is due next March, and if any person is in the Institute for six months before that comes in, they are not let out, but it is kept by the authorities, which is another disgraceful outrage on the liberty of human beings. I could see she was going mad with despair, and felt that it would be criminal to leave her there, so made enquiries as to how I could remove her, and finally got permission to do so if I promised to look after her. I seized a lot of clothes from a friend of mine and proceeded one fine afternoon to release the prisoner. When I got to the Lodge there was a very pleasant

Irishman in charge. He produced a lot of papers for me to sign and fill in, but in the course of conversation we discovered that we had both lived near Lismore, and with this bond in common all ceremony was thrown to the winds. After a good deal of conversation on the local topics of that celebrated city, I suddenly remembered my mission, and said : " Well, I had better fill in all these papers, I suppose " ; but he would have none of it. " Ah ! not at all, don't mind them," he said, and tore them up.

Proceeding on my way I found Nelly shaking with anxiety in a building that was put aside for receiving inmates. The nurse in command and I then dressed her from the skin up, as they say in Ireland. Even the nurse got infected with the general excitement, as she said her whole life was spent admitting weeping old ladies and assisting them to remove their treasured garments and put on the dreadful soulless livery of the Institute, so this was a red-letter day in her career ; as, though many came in, none ever went out alive. Thus Nelly and I toddled slowly forth hand in hand, the gate clanging behind us, the nurse and the porter waving a fond farewell. However, the question then arose as to where we were to go, which was not quite as easy as you might think. Nelly had prattled to me of a friend of hers who was an Old Age Pensioner at Notting Dale, and she seemed to think that if we once got to her abode all would be well ; the only drawback was that I found she could not remember the friend's name or address. However, it is no good letting little things like this deter you from your purpose, so I persuaded her to think of some street in that district where she had done her shopping, and armed with that we took a taximan into our confidence, and got him to drive us thither.

When we got out I paid the taxi off, as I had a feeling that we were in for a long voyage of discovery. Nelly said she felt sure she would know the look of the house if she saw it, so we started away down a slummy-looking street at a very slow walk, Nelly looking at all the houses in turn and deciding against them. The population, who were having loud conversations with each other either from their doorsteps or while leaning out of the windows, began to take an interest in us and gradually joined in the hunt, making suggestions, and being very helpful and friendly. We moved in a body into the next street and collected the inhabitants from there as well, so that by the time we got to the third or fourth street practically everyone in the district was taking a hand.

At last Nelly stiffened like a pointer after game, and she stopped before a little house and declared that this was the one, but alas ! on enquiry it was found that it had been sold, and all the lodgers moved away to different places. All then argued fiercely with each other as to former inhabitants' new addresses, and finally amidst great popular enthusiasm, a withered-looking old mummy was unearthed from a room the size of a cupboard in the next street. However, she showed faint signs of life on seeing Nelly, so the first part of our quest was accomplished. There was no doubt that the cupboard would not contain any more lodgers, and no one could think of a hole or corner to spare in the whole district, until some bright spirit suggested Torch House exactly opposite. This turned out to be the most attractive old place, through a big gate in a yard, looking like a farm house. It is run by " the Ladies." I don't quite know who they are, but certainly they deserve the most immense amount

of credit. It is a lodging-house for old ladies ; they pay a shilling a night, and have the use of a lovely long-raftered kitchen, where they can cook any food they like to get and sit down and eat it at any of the little tables by the long low windows.

As long as they keep themselves clean and do not quarrel there are no rules or regulations, except to mention before going out if they should be coming in later than ten o'clock. They are free to come and go as they like, and in consequence there never is any trouble or bother with them. An extremely nice and capable girl has an office with a telephone in the Lodge, and her own rooms above, and she does everything that is necessary, even to seeing after anyone who is ill, or doing any food commissions or a little cooking for some old lady who is temporarily incapacitated from doing it herself. Anyhow, Nelly is happy. She lives at Torch House, and spends most of her time in the cupboard with her friend, and what more could anybody wish ?

Miss Baxter came to the conclusion in September (1930) that the down-and-outs would prefer us to come out more often, and not stay quite so late, so we started doing five nights a week instead of seven a fortnight, and it has been a great success, particularly as there are so many more than there were at first. We used to think sixty people on the Embankment and twenty-five to thirty in the Bayswater Road quite a big evening, but this last year I do not think we have ever had less than 200, and generally over 300. All last winter we stood at the Admiralty Arch, as Trafalgar Square was the fashionable place to sleep, or at any rate spend the night in, but in the spring, when the less cold nights started, the numbers went up to nearly 400, as they very wisely kept their poor little eightpence, if they

had it, for bad nights, or to use on food in the daytime, and stayed out when it was fine, besides which so many shelters and charities close down at Easter and all their friends are on the streets again, so we thought we might be taking up too much room at the Arch and moved down to the Embankment.

I saw an article about the dole in a newspaper a little time ago, and though none of our down-and-outs are eligible for the dole, the writer mentioned the coffee-stall with great scorn. According to him, the ground round the Admiralty Arch was so strewn with the tea and bread and dripping which our patrons had thrown away that people had to wade through it in the morning, which seems odd, as we always took great care before leaving to tidy up the mess, consisting mostly of paper left by the more trampy of our friends, who collect newspaper posters to cover themselves with, and will leave it about when they move off. There were occasionally a few bits of crust lying about in cases where the old people had no teeth and could not chew them, but these we collected, and nothing was left, nor were there any complaints.

In the article the reporter spoke very cuttingly of the well-dressed appearance of some of the boys, which shows how unsafe it is to write things without first taking the trouble to find out about the subjects mentioned. Some of these smart ones had come down to see us and report how they were getting on in their jobs, and incidentally we had most probably given them the clothes which were so much admired ; others were just starting in jobs, and we had picked up clothes for them or they would not have been taken on. Yet again, some whose clothes had been in pawn we had managed to redeem and set them on their feet again.

What no one seems to realize is that we get all classes out with the van—even professional men—and heaps of clerks, and there is no reason to suppose that a clerk gets any less hungry than a rough boy in rags, though he has to wear what clothes still remain to him. However, it is not the least use pointing out these facts to people with comfortable homes of their own—it just infuriates them. I suppose the reason is that no one could really feel happy in their warm beds if they realized that all these people were out in the cold and rain, unless they can persuade themselves that it must be by their own fault that they are homeless.

People have often hinted that the “down-and-outs” stay out at night entirely for the pleasure of drinking our tea, and I was amused to see that the police made their annual census of homeless people on the coldest night of the year, when of course every single soul who had a few pence would spend them on a bed. They reported sixty out, whereas the night of the real census, which was on a Sunday, and therefore a night that all the van folk knew for certain that we were not coming out, there were 500 people. This in spite of the fact that I had given away a lot of beds for that night on purpose, as all our friends seemed to have the greatest horror of being put down as derelicts on the census paper.

We often get obvious reporters looking for copy standing about near the van, and they generally try to get into conversation with the more chatty of our friends and take them off for a meal somewhere to extract data and information from them. Very often the boy returns later, and with hoots of joy retails to us all the stories he has stuffed the newspaper man with. They are cute enough to know at once what the journalist

wants to hear, and this is supplied *ad lib.*, mostly furnished from their own vivid imagination, so no wonder the reporter is thrilled, judging from the marvellous tales they tell even to us, who know them intimately and have every means of finding out from both their friends and their enemies what is true.

A day or so after the article appeared, in which the coffee-van was so sneeringly alluded to, there was another describing the shelter in Holy Trinity Church, Gray's Inn Road, run by the S.O.S. Society, full of their praises. However, while agreeing most cordially with everything said about the excellence of the Church shelter, I could not help being struck by the different tone of the article. Considering that the down-and-outs that were being taken in each night at Holy Trinity while it was open during the winter were exactly the same as our lot—in fact, any time that I have been to the church I have known every single person sleeping there—I could not quite grasp why it was considered perfectly correct to take in and give food to the 200 men who managed to get first on the rank, without any questions being asked by the S.O.S. people, and at the same time completely ridiculous and unnecessary of the coffee-van to give food and a little cheerfulness to the other 300 or so who were not fortunate enough to get into the shelter ; but no doubt there must be some good, if rather obscure, reason for this, as everybody knows that what newspapers say must be right.

Still, in spite of all the scorn and disapproval, the van goes merrily along, and we manage to survive. I have been very lucky in getting boys into jobs lately, and lots of comic things have happened to keep our spirits up. One of the old men who entertain theatre queues

passed by one night and, when he saw our crowd stretching three or four deep all the way down the pavement, he pulled out his mouth-organ and went through all of his pathetic little turn, ending up with a song and dance to his tambourine ; then he took off his cap and passed down the line for the collection. However, he did not seem the least bit upset at the lack of response, and when he got to the van took a little refreshment quite cheerfully, but I thought what a marvellous opportunity it would have been for a comic artist to draw the scene and label the picture " The Optimist."

Sometimes mischievous boys come down to rag the van, thinking we must be very religious or perhaps ardent temperance people, as we dispense tea. Three of these came one night and tried to get a rise. They did not go in the queue, but stayed on the right-hand side discussing us loudly together, and hoping we would get annoyed, but we laughed at their sallies and turned the chaff on to them, much to their surprise, so they came up and asked for a pint of ale. I said I was sorry I had drunk up all our stock ! which wasn't the answer they had expected at all. The next night they came out again, and when they asked for something they knew we had not got, I told them that I had brought out a special present for them, and handed them each a carrot, to the hoots of joy of the other people. In the end I chaffed them so unmercifully that they gave in, afterwards becoming our warmest friends and helpers, coming down on purpose to collect the cups and help with the queue, etc. Now they are all settled up into good jobs and doing well. They often speak about the carrots when I see them, and tell me what awful fools they felt that night.

One very wet night I wanted to go to St. Martin-in-the-Fields to ask the policewoman there about some case, so we stopped for a minute, and when I got up the steps I found a lot of our friends standing about, very disgruntled, as they could not get into the crypt. They complained bitterly to me, saying : " She has got all her best boys down there." When I rang the bell she besought me to come and see for myself how full the place was, and to tell the boys outside that there really was no room. When I got down into the crypt and saw the " best boys " lying in serried rows, I got the giggles ; such a collection of lousy old men and all snoring away like trumpeters, in an atmosphere you could have cut with a knife. Luckily the " Peris at the Gate " believed me when I returned, and so came along under the railway arches to the van instead.

Some man tried to blackmail me a short time ago. He spoke on the telephone, a long preamble about a terrible story that was going round about me, and how he could silence the scandal, but he would need money, etc. I could not make head or tail of it, and kept on saying : " But what are you talking about ?—what is the story ? " —this out of pure inquisitiveness, as I did not care a pin even if there really was one. However, he was very guarded, and kept on saying that if it was true and got about, my character would be irretrievably ruined, and when I said I didn't worry he became very bold, saying that he was beginning to think it was true after all, and that he was surprised and grieved that such a thing could be said of a lady in my position.

I think he must have been going on the principle of " All is discovered : Fly ! " hoping that I had some horrid secret well hidden in my past that I dreaded

having disclosed, because he seemed awfully bored when I said cheerfully : " When you get to my age you either have lost your character long ago, or else have ceased to worry about having one or not," and rang off. Anyhow, I never heard any more about it, and nobody else seems to have heard about my lurid past, though I was thrilled over it, and longed to hear what it might be.

The people whose point of view I never have been able to understand are the ones who come up to the van, talk a lot about the rescue work they have done, and either present us with dud cheques or offer imaginary jobs to some of the people on the queue. Sometimes they say they are contractors, and could we find them three or four good men and send them down to Croydon or even farther away. I have never known them to be genuine yet.

Other quite well-meaning people come up and, instead of giving money to the van or telling us to help any special cases with it—which would be the greatest help—they ask us to change a pound note into sixpences, as they want to give one to each of the men. Why they imagine that we should start out with forty sixpences on the van, or what good these would be among 300 people nobody knows, but this happens continually and, of course, the scroungers rush after them and start mobbing them, whereas the decent ones who need help keep away.

One night a perfectly strange woman came up with the others for tea and food. She was very chatty and complimentary about the tea, but we were astonished to hear her say to two old women who were grumbling about their feet and about having had to walk all the way from the Embankment to the Arch : " What are

you grumbling about ? Don't *we* give you just as good food up here as down there ? ” Up till that moment we had not realized her kind generosity ! !

An old man came up without any boots on one evening and asked us what we were going to do about it. He was very well dressed and had two ties on ; he also had a perfectly good and clean pair of socks on, which made us wonder a little, as you cannot walk very far in socks without them getting soiled, if not worn. One of the boys whispered that he had a pair of boots on in the Square, and must have taken them off for our benefit, so we said we hadn't got any. The next night he had his boots on, and two hats, so we think he must have been collecting a little trousseau—two of everything !

One boy asked me to get him a job. He said he had come up from the country, and was very good at milking cows. Of course, the others teased him about hunting for cows in London, and told him to sell newspapers instead, but he said that milking cows was a very scientific job, and that he could no more sell newspapers than they could milk cows, so I suppose selling papers must be scientific too.

Many of the old men disappear for a time—sometimes for months—and they are so pleased when we notice and say, “ Hullo, hullo, where have you been all this time ? ” Very often men and boys faint away from exhaustion and hunger while they are waiting in the queue. We lay them down and feed them, and see that they have a bed. A couple of the boys will volunteer to leave their food and take the man safely into the doss, and perhaps a kind-hearted taxi will give them a lift, if they all sit on the floor so as not to get him into trouble with the police. Every night there is

somebody new or something fresh. We live so fast that we don't realize how our crowd has changed until someone who has been away at sea or in prison or in a job returns to find he knows hardly anyone there, though it may be only three months later. The good ones may get respectable and forget us, but the naughty ones always come back.

CHAPTER XIII

LOOKING back on my life now, the thing that impresses me most is not only the marvellous changes that I have seen in convenience and simple comfort, but the spread of cheerfulness, interest, and general fullness of life among all classes from top to bottom. The actual changes are really startling when one remembers the excitement over bicycles : how one rode just for pleasure—did tricks on it—riding without hands or feet—and thought that the advent of the bicycle had entirely altered the whole outlook of one's life. Yet, putting aside bicycling clubs, messengers, and people who live a short way out from some local town and use one for convenience when they go shopping, who goes bicycling now, unless they have to get to some place, or to their work, and have no other way of doing so ? What changes there have been even with these ! I have never ridden a free-wheel bicycle in my life, but I do not suppose the other kind are even made now.

Think of the difference that electric light has made. I remember Granny Waterford boasting very proudly that she would not have anything in her house that she did not understand ; and long after I married it was looked on as a marvellous feat to put electric light into a country house. We never had it in Ireland, and spent our time groping down long dark passages with a flickering little lamp at the end to guide our steps, being plunged into complete darkness again on rounding the corner. Think of the work of those lamps—the trimming of them every day and the carrying round

every evening and back in the morning. We had twenty-six at Ballysaggart, and lived in a deep gloom notwithstanding. Reading in bed by the light of a flickering candle in a flat candlestick is another joy we are well rid of. If the window was open the draught always blew the grease in a cascade down one side, or some silly moth would commit suicide with the same effect.

Telephones were marvellous, though one never could hear, and got writers' cramp through squeezing the bit in the middle of the waist. They were always placed very high up on the wall, so that it was necessary to stand all through the long wait and unintelligible conversation, and the location was carefully chosen so as to be as ungetatable and draughty as possible—the front hall in small houses, and in large ones down in the butler's pantry in the basement. 'Thank goodness for "extensions,"' but they, again, are comparatively recent.

When gramophones came in they were looked on as being purely for the benefit of the children, and they were presented to the nursery with a mixture of very music-hall tunes and fairy-stories told by men and women with harsh nasal voices. Harry Lauder was the great favourite, and luckily his voice had a softening effect even upon the most raucous instrument endowed with a huge trumpet. The pianola, on the other hand, was a great asset to the drawing-room, and it really could be played with great expression by tricks of varying time and volume of sound, but it was quite a knack, and a good deal of suffering was caused by those who had not acquired this or saw no necessity to do so.

It is comparatively lately that the trains on the Underground railway have been driven by electricity

The atmosphere of thick black smoke was so dense that you could hardly see the train at all, even in the stations, and the tunnels were like a pea-soup fog.

The first cinematograph I saw was in 1897 of the Fitzsimmons and Corbett fight. The picture shook up and down, and had streaks shimmering down it all the time, as if it had been taken while a slanting shower of rain was pouring down. It made us very dizzy, but we thought it wonderful all the same.

Then motors came ; I can remember, when I was in Paris in 1896, how we ran to the window to see one pass, and had plenty of time to get there too and to call others to come and see the sight. You could hear it coming for such a long way. When people started to get them in England they always had a French chauffeur—hence the word—and if anyone wished to speak of something very grand it was always “my De Dion Bouton ” instead of “my Rolls-Royce.” When my brother bought a car in 1903 it was about the second one in the South of Ireland, and I remember great consultations as to whether it would be safe for me to go in it, as Tony was expected to arrive a few weeks later, though a rattling pony-cart without rubber tyres was considered quite a suitable mode of conveyance for anybody in delicate health. I think we bought our first one in 1910, and very few other people had one round Lismore in those days, so I was much in demand to take all my neighbours on their long-distance calls. I got into all sorts of trouble with Claud for overloading the car, which was an ordinary five-seater one, my greatest achievement being when I helped with someone’s school-treat a couple of miles beyond Cappoquin, and brought all the children back to that village at the end in four relays—eighteen children, a teacher, and

myself in each load—a feat which I trusted would never reach his ears.

As far as I can remember taxis did not come upon the streets of London till some time after private motors made their appearance. One always allowed half an hour to get out to dinner or to a play in the old hansom-cab days. When I was young it was considered impossible for a girl to drive alone in a hansom ; you had to take a “ growler ” if without a chaperon even in the daytime. Rich young men who went in for being very smart had a private hansom of their own, but they would not of course have offered any girl a lift in it. It was only about a year before the War that the cab whistles were officially altered to one long one for a taxi, two short ones for a hansom, and three for a growler ; up till then the four-wheeler was No. 1 and the taxi No. 3.

I remember the first motor-bus I ever went in was one that started in a small street behind Marble Arch and went down to Kilburn and beyond every half-hour. Our darling Skom lived at Brondesbury then, and before this started we used to allow an hour to get down there from Marble Arch in a horse-bus. Oh ! the joy of being able to get about quickly, not to speak of the misery of driving behind lame and tired horses, and having to stand the eternal thrashing of them that went on the whole time—to see the wretched bus-horses straining and sweating to get up the hills, or even to start at all.

Living at our corner of Charles Street, St. James's Square, and what was then called Waterloo Place (now Lower Regent Street), we could not look out of the window or move out of the door without seeing the incessant struggling and slithering of horses on wet,

muddy days. Lots of the streets were paved with stone cobbles, and the clatter and falling of horses perpetually went on. I don't suppose we ever went for a walk as children without seeing two or three horses down, and the first thing one did as a matter of course was to go and sit on their heads to keep them from struggling until the harness had been undone or cut, and the cart moved back, so that they could get up by themselves without breaking their back or legs against the pole or shafts. Then the mess they made—the streets of London absolutely stank like a dung-heap. Coming home from dances early in the summer mornings the smell used to be terrible, and, though a few men and boys were employed cleaning up the roads in a rough, haphazard sort of way, there was no idea of flooding the streets with a hose—in fact, this would probably only have increased the mess, as they were just ordinary roads, and the smallest shower made them into a sea of mud, crossing being made possible at various places by old men and women crossing-sweepers, who brushed a dry path about a yard or so wide, leaving a little wall of mud at each edge. These crossings were much sought after, and belonged to the person who had first devised them, but I don't know if they paid anything for their pitch or what happened when a crossing-sweeper died.

There was an old woman who swept a crossing in St. James's Square, and she fed all the cats in the district. She had a little camp-stool by the railings of the Square garden, and sat there surrounded by cats. We knew her very well, and she always said: "Good morning, my Lady," when we went by. After 30 Charles Street was sold, I would not go near that part of London for a long while, but it so happened

that about seven years afterwards I did take a short cut through St. James's Square. There she still was with her cats, and as I passed she said the usual salutation in the same tone, as if I had passed every day as usual.

It was pathetic to see the sweepers trying to find something to sweep after the streets were tarred ; their old patrons still gave them the usual sixpence, but they knew that their day was done. I remember slipping and falling down into a lake of slimy mud in Cannon Street one morning when I was about twenty-five. It must have been at least a foot deep, and stretched out from the kerbstone for a couple of yards. I was picked up by three small boys, who took out their handkerchiefs, and added to the disaster by smearing the mud over the few bits of me which were untouched, but I believe they meant well. However, I caused a sensation in the station when I went to catch a train in this sticky condition, and there everybody took a hand without any marked success.

I recollect at Ranelagh seeing a collection of balloons which were to go up, and a terrible thunderstorm came on. Everybody said that if the balloons were struck there would be an awful explosion, and we should be blown to bits. I think this must have been about 1906.

Of course, everyone can remember the excitement over aeroplanes, as until the War there were thousands of people who had never seen one. The airmen who were training at Fermoy and Kilworth occasionally flew in our direction, and as Ballysaggart was very high up, the aeroplane was generally low enough for us to see the men in the cockpit, and we used to rush out and wave. We bucked a lot to the people in Lismore about our air visitors, and pretended that they were always landing on the roof, but the unfortunate part

was that, like " Matilda, who told lies and was burnt to death " in *Cautionary Tales for Children*, we had prevaricated so often about this, that, when an aeroplane did actually come down in our field one Sunday just before lunch, none of our neighbours would believe us or be the least astonished about it. We heard it landing on the hill behind the house the other side of some trees. All the household turned out as one man to search for the fliers, and we eventually discovered them being led down a path in the wood by Nelly, the second housemaid, who had invited them in to luncheon. When the first aeroplane flew over the bay at Ardmore, one old countrywoman with a basket of chickens in her arms sank down on her knees on the strand saying, " Ah ! Glory be to God—there goes a submarine a-skating in the sky."

When I was at the Air Pageant in 1930, I could not help remembering the first time I saw the Frenchman Blériot loop the loop and do a spiral descent, and how sick with horror it made me, yet one took all the wonderful stunts at Hendon as a matter of course.

Wireless is too new to need mentioning, but how one jeered and laughed in 1920 when enthusiastic people drew a picture of everybody listening in—in their own homes—as they do to-day.

People talk of noise now as if it were quite a new thing that had never existed in our young days, but in point of fact the streets of London were far noisier then than now. The clop-clop of horses' feet and the grinding of the tyreless wheels on the rough roads made a ceaseless din; even smart victorias and broughams hardly ever had solid tyres on them. We had them only because of my father's injury to his spine, but they were looked on as being most unusual. I think it was the

S. and T. hansoms which were the first to have rubber tyres. They were a speculation put on the streets by our cousin, Lord Shrewsbury, who was one of the original Peers who thought of going in for business in any form. It was looked on as an amiable eccentricity on his part by the rest of the family.

Besides the noise of the traffic there were the street cries—newspapers and endless cab-whistles—which on a wet evening went on and on dismally sometimes for fifteen or twenty minutes. It was only the War that stopped this scourge on account of the many Red Cross Hospitals scattered round in the large houses of so many streets, the scarcity of cabs making the whistling practically incessant. I admit that the electric drill tearing up a street in front of a house is terrible, but on the other hand, it does do its work quickly and gets it over, whereas in the old days two men heaving alternate blows with sledge-hammers on to a sort of metal nail is not very much more bearable and takes ten times as long.

There are not nearly as many barrel-organs—hurdy-gurdies—and street singers as there used to be, and though one suffers a certain amount from harsh gramophone sounds coming from kitchens across the street during the week-ends when “the family” are away, at least one does not have the eternal piano practising of yesteryear, and the nervous exhaustion of waiting for the same wrong note at the same place in the same tune, played over and over again day by day.

With regard to servants, ancient and modern, I would say that there is a great improvement in conditions for both masters and employees. The under servants certainly had a dog's life, mostly from the convention that as long as they were young they were made of quite

different clay from the upper servants, and it was these latter much more than the employers who saw to it that their lives were made such a misery—partly from the schoolboy theory of “Well, I had to go through it, so it must be right, and why shouldn’t you?”—and partly for the same reason that all elderly people express surprise that their young relations should want to go out and about and enjoy themselves. They have forgotten that they wanted to do the same, and probably did, when they got the chance.

However, most of the Tartars of the Steward’s room are either retiring into private life or finding that they have to mind their manners with the modern undermaid, and a very good thing too. The upper servants tyrannized just as much in a different way over their masters and mistresses, who would no more have dared produce knitting, needlework, or cards even for an innocent game of patience on Sundays than fly. They were quite apologetic about it, saying : “Do you mind, dear, the servants would be so shocked, you know?” and as for ladies’-maids, they ruled their mistresses with a rod of iron. The latter were helpless without them ; they could not even do their own hair up. A great many of my own generation cannot do it up even now. Personally, I have a horror of being dependent on anybody, and when I was twenty I determined that I would learn to dress my hair myself, but my friends thought it most eccentric of me, and among Society people it was an almost unknown accomplishment. As for my mother’s generation and Granny’s, they were too helpless for words, and I do not believe they would have known how to boil an egg if they were starving. They never even took their own tickets at a railway station—a footman went on and did it, having

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the carriage engaged, and all the rugs and hand luggage settled in there by the maid who went with him. I am always so grateful to my father and mother for bringing us up to look after ourselves. Mother would never let our nurse put on our shoes and stockings, and later, when we were growing up, encouraged us to see after our own affairs in every way. She said : " If you are hungry and haven't the sense to get yourself some food, you deserve to starve."

When I was a girl you could not walk down the street in London by yourself, and had to take a maid, unless someone else was going with you. One travelled first class with a maid, though she went in the second-class carriage next door, so I do not know what good she was. I remember walking by myself from a house round the corner when I was seventeen. I put my rings on my left hand, and turned one of them round to look as if it was a plain gold wedding-ring, so that no one should think I was fast !!

As for the nonsense talked about people of my generation being able to cook, make jams, and all the bustling housewife stuff, it is just as much pure imagination as when people said the same to us of former generations. A few mistresses of the smaller county-gentry class may have gone about with an enormous bunch of keys in their pocket, and sat on them uncomfortably for most of the day, but what good it did to anyone I never have discovered, except to give a lot of trouble to the household when they wanted anything out of the store-room, the parlour-maid having to come up and ask for " the keys " in a husky whisper, these being fished out or hunted for about the room before being taken away to unlock it. In more spacious times there were a lot of servants in the background, and the

mistress may have come down and fussed round when the jam was being made, probably getting very much in the way, staying there ten minutes, and then saying to her family and friends : " My dear, we made such a lot of jam yesterday ; it took ' us ' the whole day."

I think critics of modern times get mixed up with farmers' wives of olden days, who, of course, did supervise their own kitchens, and probably do still just as effectively if not so extravagantly.

You have only to look through old *Punches* as far back as they go to see the same old jokes about Mrs. Newlywed and her cooking, as about the tin-opener joke of to-day. Certainly the War did a lot of good in the way of forcing people to be of more practical use in the world, and there are very few girls, except among the new-rich class, who could not turn to and make some sort of a meal. Nowadays there is not the same glut of food in the ordinary small house to fall back upon in an emergency, and to be a good tin-opener is an extremely useful accomplishment for any housewife of the present time.

Young mothers can even look after their own children, which was not usual even in my day, though I remember a miserable week when Nanny was away on her holiday, in which I took charge of Tony and Clodagh, aged two and four. By the time she came back I had got them into every bad habit that it was possible for them to acquire. I didn't care, as long as it kept them from bawling, whether they sucked " dummies " or climbed into my bed in the middle of the night. Mercifully she had such trouble in training them into the way they should go after my evil influence that it completely put her off having holidays for years, which was a great comfort to me. I really don't know

why she trusted them to me at all even that time, as she had a very poor opinion of my motherly instinct ever since the time that I interviewed her first, when Clodagh was a month old. She had asked me what food we gave the baby, and I could not remember, but said I thought she had a little limewater, as I had seen a large bottle with "Limewater" written on it in the nursery, so I am afraid there was not much "mothercraft" about me. As a matter of fact, being the youngest of my family, I don't think I had ever seen a small baby until I had one myself. Nobody dreamt of nursing their babies when I was young, and I don't fancy they did in Mother's time either; certainly she never did. It was about the time that Mother married that chloroform was first used in maternity cases. The Bishop of Waterford's wife wrote to her when my brother was coming, and said she hoped that she would have nothing to do with this wicked new-fangled notion of having chloroform, as she must remember God sent the pain; to which Mother replied with much spirit, asking Mrs. Day who she thought had sent the chloroform!

When I first grew up, all the middle-aged people complained bitterly about the manners of the modern girls and young men. Mother and Granny Beaufort both told me that this decay of behaviour had been noted in their day too. Certainly the manners of my generation did leave a good deal to be desired. No girl or young man at a dance ever dreamt of speaking to a chaperon, however well they knew her, or how often they had stayed in her house. Susan and I had had such special kindness from so many older women on account of all our troubles that we knew them better than most girls, particularly as when repaying a call

we had to talk to the hostess herself, Mother not being there to do that for us, so that we always went and said "How d'ye do?" to the chaperons sitting on the bench. Mary Abercorn told us that lots of her friends had remarked to her that we were the only girls who appeared to know they existed at all, but nowadays both girls and men invariably smile and wave to chaperons they know, very often dancing up and down in front of them to have a chat, and are most pleasant and friendly. All my children's friends of both sexes come and pour out their griefs, asking for advice, and even occasionally taking it, which is always very flattering to the aged.

As for chivalry, of which we hear so much—I very much doubt if it ever existed in any age. No doubt young men, and old ones too, have always taken a lot of trouble to assist beauty in distress, but I never noticed any anxiety amongst these gentlemen to take care of the aged, unless the aforesaid were rich and childless, or the many worthy but plain women who encumber the earth. If you boil it down, you will find that, as far as the ordinary woman of reasonably good character is concerned, the men she sees most of are father, brothers, and husband, and nobody would think of expecting chivalry from these. If a woman is pretty and attractive she will get a lot of attention from friends and acquaintances of the male sex in any case, so what is the use of chivalry at all?

Men and women are alike in this respect. Some are kind-hearted, and will give up their seat in a bus or do a hand's turn for a passer-by, and others would never notice or think of doing it. It has nothing to do with sex whatever. The people who tell one that men will not give up their seat in a bus now because of sex

equality, and make out that they used to do this in old days, show how little they know by this very remark, as before the War no one was allowed to stand in buses at all, so if there was not a seat for them no man or woman was allowed to get in. I have always been in buses nearly all my life, but ordinary Society people never dreamt of doing such a thing, and used to get a little hot and bothered if I alluded to this mode of progression. As a matter of fact, my experience is that manners in buses, trains, and all public places are a good deal better than they used to be, and I defy anyone to say that it does not take more pluck to get into the only empty seat of a first-class railway carriage than standing-room of a third. If middle-aged people complain that nowadays they are hustled in a bus queue or trampled on in the Tube—that everyone is rushing and everything is vulgar and different—they don't realize that it is only they who are leading a different life, and have now to mix with all those who always had to rush and be pushed and trampled. Certainly there are more people hurrying about and more girls in business who have to get home at six o'clock, but equally there are more buses and trains to take them. In old days there was just the same struggle to get on to the small, narrow horse-buses which took twelve people inside and fourteen out and in which we all sat in two long rows facing each other—the fat old lady taking up more than her allotted bit, as she does unto this day.

We used to get into a lot of trouble over our expressions, which were considered most unladylike—"dreadfully," "fearfully," and "awfully" were the ones most objected to, whereas "too disgry for words" (i.e. disgusting), and "deevy" (for divine) were only used by the smart racing set, having been invented by

Mrs. Hwfa Williams. People said that behaviour was “ *très deuxième* ” for second-rate, but I have forgotten whole generations of expressions before the very short era of “ old Bean ” and “ old fruit,” to which hearty people of middle age seem to cling so lovingly. “ Terribly,” “ definitely,” “ bogus,” “ shy-making ” have all had their day since then, bringing us to the “ not so dungy ” of last summer. I must confess that I have a great affection for “ O.K. Chief,” “ Sez you,” and “ Oh ! yeah,” though I fear they are no longer quite the rage. However, we still use them with much expression out at the coffee-van.

CHAPTER XIV

AMUSEMENTS have changed more completely than anything else in the last half-century. Even thirty-four years ago, when I grew up, the lives of the middle classes must have been too boring for words. They did not go in much for entertaining except in the way of rather solid dinner-parties, followed by a game of whist, the "young people" being expected to look at albums of old photographs, whispering and giggling together, and being told not to make so much noise. There really was nothing they could do except occasionally to go to the theatre, but this was quite an event, and the whole family would be included. Restaurants were quite out of the question, except Willis's Rooms, which were near where the St. James's Theatre is now, I think, but even that would be only for some family gathering. There was literally nowhere that they could dance, unless they were asked to a private ball or to some yearly charity or hunt affair, and even then if the Society people were going it would be difficult to get tickets.

The absolute lack of any interest in life in the families of business or professional people was so appalling. It was considered impossible for them to do any work of any kind, even in the house. There was plenty of heavy show, lots of food and servants, but even the wife, once she had ordered the food, had practically nothing to do except go for a drive in the afternoon. The fact of being a wife and mother apparently was considered quite enough occupation for anyone, though

as there were an unlimited number of excellent servants, nurses, and governesses, one wonders how she managed to get through the day. Very few middle-aged people went shopping, unless it was to try on at a dressmaker's. Their maids bought anything that had to be got. This was the rule, even in high Society. I do not think that Granny Beaufort had ever been into a shop in her life, and her maid made all her clothes. She would even say, "Will you put on your new gown, your Grace?" and produce one that Granny had never seen or thought of—could anything be more uninteresting?

Mother chose her things, but I do not remember her ever going shopping. We did, of course, but our maid got the ordinary things that were needed. In fact, she generally got much more than was necessary, and I never realized until I gave up having a maid after I married how much money it saved me in every way. That awful bill for cottons, tapes, and buttons which invariably mounted up to thirty-five pounds for absolutely nothing before you could look round! If a maid makes some of your clothes the expense in thread alone seems to come to as much as if it were bought in a shop, not to speak of the misery of being caught and made to try on a dozen times just when you are in a hurry to start out, or have come in dead-tired, while the sight of little bits of the stuff lying about everywhere has sickened you of the whole garment long before it is finished.

I do not know why it is that maids always keep an apple in the top right-hand drawer of the chest of drawers in their room, but this seems to be inevitable; the smell of that apple ruined my life for years, added to the habit of removing all my clothes from their proper

place to iron, or to mend, and never bringing them back, so that I had to go searching for them round the appley room on all occasions.

Even smart people had extraordinary little to do, and had a very stiff and obvious time. We used to be sorry for the other girls going about in London, as though they went out to all the balls during the season like we did, they had very boring times during the day. Their mothers expected them to go out in the carriage with them every afternoon, leaving cards on acquaintances, and then driving round and round the Park. Sometimes they were dropped on the way home to have tea with a relation, but generally they were expected to be in for every meal.

Heaps of people used to be rather astonished and shocked at our going to plays alone with Skom or some woman friend. They thought that "ladies" could not go to the theatre without a man to escort them, so we lay low about going if we thought it would upset them, but we went all the same, and also made up little parties to dine at Ranelagh and wander about the grounds afterwards with our best young men of the moment, but we kept quiet about these "fast" expeditions too. It would have been impossible to ask a young man to tea alone with you at your house. The only way I managed was by inviting all the people who might get in the way to tea with each other at somebody else's house, and then staying at home with a headache myself! Then if they discovered that he had been there, I pretended he had come by chance, and if they didn't I said nothing and "lived to fight another day" so to speak!

During the season people rode in Rotten Row every morning—about ten o'clock was the fashionable time—

and we all went and sat in the Park, going forward to speak to the riders when they pulled up at the railings. After tea people sat about near the Achilles statue, and one could make assignations to meet young men, but it was not very satisfactory, as there generally was such a crowd no chair near would be available for them to sit on, so they stood about in front for a bit and then had to wander off.

People talk nowadays of the peace and restfulness of the life in those days, but there is nothing restful in having no interest to take you out of yourself. Certainly everybody "rested" up in their rooms, but as they had done nothing all day it was a mystery how they became tired, unless it was through complete boredom, which is always very exhausting.

Once you were married the awful part was that you either had to be "good" or "bad." If you were good you behaved nicely and had an extremely dull life. If you were bad, of course there were heaps of thrilling adventures. The racing set, who were alluded to as "the Smart Set" in newspapers, got a good deal of fun and notoriety. They had wild affairs with each other's wives and husbands, and as divorce was out of question, lived with each other quite indiscriminately, and made no secret of it, in a way that would surprise ordinary people nowadays. Their first baby generally was legitimate, but after that their family varied in descent in the most amazing way. This was so taken for granted among the "Fast Set," that if two people did really love each other and remained faithful, their liaison was looked on as being as respectable and dull as a marriage. Of course, there are lots of notorious people nowadays, but I do think that the ordinary members of Society who do not go into extremes in any direction

are far more healthy, sensible, and moral than they used to be, simply from the fact that it is possible to break an unhappy marriage in a reasonable way by mutual consent, and give each other a chance of making a new life. However, as it seems to be necessary for the country's good never to appoint a judge until he is over ninety years old, it will take some years before the Judicial Bench take this point of view, and perfectly good people will go on being forced to pretend to do disgusting things against their will so as to get their freedom.

I must say that the French idea seems to me so very much more sensible. They look on divorce as being a completely private affair between the persons concerned, to settle between themselves, and the only necessity for an official ceremony is to see that the business part of it is satisfactorily arranged to suit both sides, and to make the affair legal. What good could possibly be done to anyone by having either disgraceful or reasonable divorce cases tried in a public court full of inquisitive or prurient-minded people, I cannot imagine, and why should human beings be brought up before a judge like criminals just because they are unhappy ?

Rich Society people in old days did not come to London as much as they do now. There was the season, of course, and perhaps a fortnight in December for Christmas shopping, but otherwise they lived at their various country places and entertained a series of large house-parties, mostly from Mondays to Saturdays, so as to have Sundays free for the servants, but during the season some people who had taken houses on the river, or who lived fairly near London, started to give week-end parties. My cousins, the Brownlows, had

large house-parties at Ashridge, and we often went to these. I do not know what is done now, but at that time, however many horses and carriages there were in the stables, rich people never sent to meet their guests at the station, which seemed extraordinary to us after living in Ireland. They ordered a horrible old fly for us, and another for the maid and luggage, so that even if it was only a mile from the station we were probably charged ten shillings for each fly, both going and coming.

Ashridge was lovely in those days, and had the most perfect lawns and grass paths I have ever seen. It was there that the American millionaire who was taken down to see the place spoke to the gardener about the grass. He admired it very much, and said airily, "I mean to have lawns like this at my new place on Long Island. Say, how do you get the grass so smooth and level?" To which the gardener replied somewhat sardonically, "It is quite easy, sir; you just roll it and mow it, and mow it and roll it for about a hundred years."

The Brownlows had shooting parties in the winter. There never was much to do in the evenings, but on one of our visits we played "Smiling Grab" after dinner. Captain Ossy Ames was staying there. He was the tallest man I have ever met, but he was so wonderfully proportioned that unless someone stood next to him you did not realize how enormous he was. On this occasion, so as to be on the same level as all the rest of us sitting at the table, he had to sit on the floor, and really, when we had to "smile" at him, his head was so enormous it positively frightened us. However, far the best player at this scientific game was Lord Dartmouth. I have never seen anyone who could "smile" so marvellously, and he invariably won.

Lord Granville, who is now our Minister in Brussels, I think, was staying there, too—a most amusing and delightful person—but he complained bitterly that directly anyone was introduced to him that person immediately asked if it was true that he had swallowed half a crown. He declared that this two and sixpence had ruined his life, and that that was the only reason that people took any interest in him, in which he was quite unduly modest. When he was a boy, he used to do conjuring tricks, pretending to swallow a shilling, and someone implored him to do the trick with a larger coin in case he really did swallow it by accident. However, the very fact of the half a crown being so much bigger put him off his balance, and he swallowed it, but he never felt any ill-effects.

I think some of the younger men were rather bored by the amusements provided in the evenings at Ashridge. I know that two of them sent telegrams to themselves on the Friday to call them back to London, as the shoot finished on that day. We found it out by the fact that we had to leave on Friday evening, as our house was sold, and we had to hand it over the next morning to the new owners. It so happened that when we said good-bye to Cousin Adelaide we got into the first fly that was waiting and drove off, but really ours was the second one, and in it was our maid "Huddy." So when Lord Kenyon and Lord Mount Edgcumbe said good-bye, they had to get into the fly with the maid. Thinking that she was English they spoke in French, so she understood every word and told us at the station. They got into the same railway carriage as we did, and we teased them frightfully all the way up to London and threatened to give them away.

Nowadays visitors are generally invited for some special thing, like a race meeting or a dance, but when I was young we just went and stayed for no particular reason, and were quite content with ordinary country life. We used to stay a lot at Blankney, as both Francis Londesborough and his wife, Gracie, were cousins of my mother's, though they were no relation to each other. We loved being with them and had such fun. The children used to come down after tea, and always insisted on our playing "Happy Families." Each of us had to take one child and advise as to the playing of the game, but I was much sought after, as Gracie and Susan would gossip together and not pay attention, thus causing the most frightful disasters, such as asking if Mr. Potts the painter was at home of someone, when he was already proved to be somewhere else. There was a rush from the drawing-room door to engage me as their partner, but Irene (now Lady Carisbrooke) had the longest legs, and nearly always got to me the first.

I think all children get dreadfully bored if their mothers stray away into grown-up chat with a friend when they are downstairs. Once when I was gossiping with Aunt Mary Abercorn, her grandchild, Billy (Lord Clonmore), when he was small, got very tired of our conversation, and after endeavouring to shift me in every polite way he could think of, finally took the bull by the horns and said: "Granny, when *will* Cousin Clodagh go to bed?" evidently thinking that nothing else would move me, and hoping devoutly that my bedtime came before his.

When I think of the clothes we wore in the old days and the discomfort of them it fills me with wonder. Those terrible straw sailor hats that made a deep red

mark on our foreheads. Huddy always called them "Scélérat," and we thought it was the French name for them until we discovered that the word meant "rascal" in that language, and that Huddy was under the impression that she was talking English. I wonder why it was that all hats were made so weighty and top-heavy, the trimming all on one side pulling one's coiffure over and dragging one's hair out by the roots? When motor caps came in we thought they were marvels of comfort, and wondered how we could have existed without them—such terrible, flat, hot, heavy things, with big peaks in the front. Smart people had one to match each of their coats and skirts.

I think the clothes were very mannish at this period—plain coats and skirts and shirts with collars and ties exactly like men wear now, or white stiff collars with cotton and linen shirts of all colours and double cuffs fastened with links. This costume was quite correct for tennis, worn with a white piqué skirt and wide petersham belt fastened with a buckle. A white flannel or serge coat and skirt was considered very smart. There was one terrible moment at a later date when shirts were made to fasten up the back, causing the wearers to wander miserably round until they could find someone to do them up. They could manage to button the top by dint of dislocating their backs, also some buttons at the bottom, but there were about three in the middle which only a human eel could possibly succeed in fastening. Untidy people gave up hope, and just left a gaping void, but to those who preferred a neat appearance these buttons were a constant trial.

Entertaining in London has changed enormously, even since the end of the War. Most of the girls who

grew up before 1918 had grown so accustomed to rushing round with men on leave from the front that a *débutante* dance bored them to death, so that the new lot who emerged in 1919 and 1920 practically started a generation of their own, and chaperons came back in full force. Claud and I gave a dance in 1920, but I had got so out of everything on account of the War and being in Ireland for so long that I knew hardly a soul in the room, and if it had not been for my sister-in-law, Maud Ryder, who lent us her house and asked nearly all the people, I do not know how we would have managed. It was terribly dull for me sitting on the chaperons' bench night after night with not a single friend of my generation to talk to. I suppose I married about a couple of years before any of my contemporaries, and therefore their children were not grown up yet. I think it must have been during the summer of 1921 that a strike came on, and people were afraid to give big dances, as several hostesses had their windows broken, but all the same, the girls had great fun that year, as the entertaining was done on the spur of the moment, with invitations by telephone, and no chaperons were asked at all.

It really is rather a pity that fashion ordains the giving of a dance for a *débutante*, as both the girl and her mother would enjoy themselves much better the second year when they had got a bit into the swim. Also, the dances would be far more amusing. Almost any mother is inclined to feel extremely nervous and worried at suddenly branching out into a hostess of the young, however much she has entertained her own friends up to that time, and somehow an anxious hostess never puts much gaiety of spirit into a dance. By 1922 most of my friends were bursting forth into

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Society once more with daughters, and after that every year entertaining became more and more amusing, until my relations, acquaintances, and friends got so numerous that it would require the Albert Hall to hold them. When Lady Burrell and I gave a dance at Norfolk House, we ended up by having twelve hundred guests, which really was the limit. However, I adore it, and every year I have helped five or six of my friends with their dances, even when I could not give one of my own.

I notice that it is always middle-aged people who moan so persistently over the changes in habits and behaviour of modern times. It never seems to occur to them how extremely grateful they ought to be for these very changes, which have altered their lives and enabled them to keep young and enjoy themselves in a way that they never could have done thirty years ago. Prosperous business men who would have gone straight home and to sleep in their studies, followed by a heavy family dinner and an evening spent reading the paper or playing a game of whist, now can jump into their car soon after four o'clock, play a round of golf, have amusing little dinners at restaurants, and even dance round if they feel inclined to keep their figures down, and the same applies to women. Wherever you go to restaurants, theatres, etc., you see twenty middle-aged people to one young couple, yet, to hear them, you would think that their lives had been completely ruined by the emancipation of the young. Personally, I think it is the greatest benefit to all concerned that the new generation can go off with their friends on their own parties and amusements. Surely it must be much better to be busy and occupied, even if it is only in enjoying yourself, for people of any age, and no one expects the same

things to amuse everybody. Why not just be glad about the pleasures and interests one has ? I have a theory that cheerfulness keeps you young in spirit and gives you a good digestion, so it certainly is worth cultivating. Just think of all the “moaners” you know—have they got indigestion ? Well, then, does not that prove my theory !!

* * *

On reading through all that I have written, I see that I have left out all the most important things. I have never told you how divinely beautiful I was, or about the way everybody adored me. Perhaps the reason was that I have tried to stick to facts ! One thing, however, I must apologize for. I said in one chapter that there was no such thing as gratitude among ordinary reasonable people ; well, this very day I had a letter from a man whom I had helped some time ago, thanking me. I read on and on, looking for the inevitable postscript in which he would ask some further boon, but none came. He thanked me all the way through and asked for nothing. Tears welled up into my eyes. I said to myself, " At last I have found that unique thing—a grateful human being."

P.S.—The address on the top of his letter, I see, is Colney Hatch Mental Institution.

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